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ELIOT'S URBAN MORALITY PLAYS

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled ELIOT'S URBAN MORALITY PLAYS submitted by Peter Cleghorn Montgomery in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

Eliot believed that the "tension within the society may become also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual". If the individual struggles within himself as a result of the struggles which surround him, then he is himself engaged in a conflict with his surroundings. The medieval morality play, Everyman, made clear that a resolution of man's conflict with his environment lay not in the earthly city of good fellowship and riches but in the heavenly city where personal interaction and unity of being (the Holy Trinity), far from being in conflict, are one and the same thing. Although T.S. Eliot's plays do not concern themselves directly with the heavenly city, they do explore ways of freeing man from his tension with the earthly city so that he can choose the heavenly one should he so wish. Indeed, these plays do concern themselves precisely with man's power of choice as it is weakened, limited, and even dominated by his city environment. No matter what choice or choices the citizen might decide to make, he must be free to make his own moral decisions - hence the title, Eliot's Urban Morality Plays.

Eliot first presented the city environment in his work in such poems as The Waste Land, The Hollow Men, Gerontion, where he explored the listlessness and apathy of urban consciousness as he found it in his own day. He then took the pathetic and banal, the sentimental and silly from the life of his audience, much as had one of his favorite music-hall comedians, Marie Lloyd, and transformed this materia prima of ethical choice into the rituals of Sweeney Agonistes, The Rock, and Murder in the Cathedral. Eliot proceeded

in this manner because, as he said, "the conflict must have meaning in the audience's experience before it can be made articulate by the dramatist and receive from the audience the response which the dramatist's art requires". These three city rituals exorcized from the urban world the boredom which militated against the integrity of the person in his temporal communal existence. Murder in the Cathedral is of special note, for it is the first of Eliot's urban works to create a character who acts, that is, who makes a moral choice. In Murder, then, Eliot caused his poetry to transcend its descriptive and exploratory function to become a poetry of action - poesis in the radical sense of the word. While Eliot was thus involved in presenting the city environment and exorcising it in his creative work, he was also accepting the responsibility of involved commitment as founder and editor of The Criterion.

Once the presentation of city environment was made, and its exorcism was accomplished through the choice made by the central character of Murder, Eliot was free to confront the modern urban environment on its own terms and in its own language and dress in The Family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, The Confidential Clerk, and The Elder Statesman. He no longer needed the pages of The Criterion to make his social commentary, he could demonstrate in practice everything he wanted to say.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE CITY AS DRAMATIC POETRY

The dramatic tension created by the interaction of man and his environment is a key element in the creative and critical work of T.S. Eliot. In a passage in After Strange Gods Eliot demonstrated very particularly both how an environment could affect him personally in a dramatic way and how a similar dramatic tension could exist between a local environment and its inhabitants of several generations:

My local feelings were stirred very sadly by my first view of New England, on arriving from Montreal, and journeying all one day through the beautiful desolate country of Vermont. Those hills had once, I suppose, been covered with primaeval forest; the forest was razed to make sheep pastures for the English settlers; now the sheep are gone, and most of the descendents of the settlers; and a new forest appeared blazing with the melancholy glory of October maple and beech and birch scattered among the evergreens; and after this procession of scarlet and gold and purple wilderness you descend to the sordor of the half-dead mill towns of southern New Hampshire and Massachusetts. It is not necessarily those lands which are the most fertile or most favoured in climate that seem to me the happiest, but those in which a long struggle of adaptation between man and his environment has brought out the best qualities of both; in which the landscape has been moulded by numerous generations of one race, and in which the landscape in turn has modified the race to its own character. And those New England mountains seemed to me to give evidence of a human success so transitory as to be more desperate than the desert.¹

The importance to Eliot of the interaction of man and his environment underlines his interest in the city, a habitation in which man has almost completely subdued his natural environment and has in turn been strongly controlled by the environments he has substituted.

In The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth Century Writers

J. Hillis Miller has briefly described the general literary context to which Eliot's artistic and critical involvement with city environment

belongs:

The specific conditions of life in the city express most concretely the new mode of existence which is coming into being for industrialized man. From Wordsworth and Coleridge through Arnold, Baudelaire and Hopkins to T.S. Eliot and Appollinaire there is an increasing dominance in poetry of the image of the city.²

Eliot himself traced his own concern with the city back to Baudelaire and Laforgue. From the former he learned, as he said, "a precedent for the poetical possibilities, never developed by any poet writing in my own language, of the more sordid aspects of the modern metropolis", and from both he learned, he went on to say, "that the sort of material that I had, the sort of experience that an adolescent had had, in an industrial city in America, could be the material for poetry; and that the source of new poetry might be found in what has been regarded hitherto as the impossible, the sterile, the intractably unpoetic".³ This poetic response to city environment found its first major manifestation in Eliot's long poem, The Waste Land.

The importance to Eliot of dramatic tension in The Waste Land has been recorded by Bonamy Dobree:

. . . as I was going along with [Eliot] after lunch, I said that one of the things I most liked about The Waste Land was its dramatic movement. Eliot at once warmed. Here was something very close to one of his deep desires, and it seems that I was the first person to have noticed this about the poem.⁴

A prime source of this dramatic tension in The Waste Land is city environment. When an environment is, like the city, a protection from the elements and a configuration of transportation facilities it tends to limit and direct action, and, at the same time, to affect through its perceptual qualities the moods, habits of mind and thought structures of its citizens. When the citizens can no longer have an effect on the

environment, their mental life is in danger of atrophy and they consequently find themselves engaged in a struggle for their souls. Eliot has given this struggle a dramatic intensity in The Waste Land by perceiving the correspondence between the plight of city dwellers and that of the lost souls in Dante's Inferno:

. . . I have borrowed lines from [Dante], in the attempt to reproduce, or rather to arouse in the reader's mind the memory, of some Dantesque scene, and thus establish a relationship between the medieval inferno and modern life. Readers of my Waste Land will perhaps remember that the vision of my city clerks trooping over London Bridge from the railway station to their offices evoked the reflection 'I had not thought death had undone so many'; and that in another place I deliberately modified a line of Dante by altering it - - 'sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled.' And I gave the references in my notes, in order to make the reader who recognized the allusion, know that I meant him to recognize it, and know that he would have missed the point if he did not recognize it.⁵

The establishment of parallels between present human struggles with the environment and past artistic expressions of similar struggles underlines or intensifies the dramatic tension of those present struggles by revealing some of their more universal or less merely contemporary dimensions. The reader is made aware that present difficulties are the common property of "numerous generations"⁶ and hence have the attributes of myth.

In so far as The Waste Land is a perception of correspondence between the conscious environmental struggles of the present and the struggles of the past, it is an exploration of myth. Myth, in Eliot's terms, is a creative awareness of "a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity", a use of the unconscious past to control, order, and give "a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history".⁷ Eliot commented on this understanding of myth in his response to the work of Stravinsky.

The strength of the images Eliot used suggests the intensity of the dramatic tension involved in man's mythical transactions with environment:

In art there should be interpenetration and metamorphosis. Even *The Golden Bough* can be read in two ways: as a collection of entertaining myths, or as a revelation of the vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation. In everything in the *Sacre du Printemps*, except in the music, one missed the sense of the present. Whether Stravinsky's music be permanent or ephemeral I do not know; but it did seem to transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor horn, the rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, the beating of iron and steel, the roar of the underground railway, and the other barbaric cries of modern life; and to transform these despairing noises into music.⁸

The "interpenetration and metamorphosis" which Eliot demanded on the artistic level is a reflection of the same kind of interaction which takes place between man and his environment. Eliot himself demonstrated in *The Waste Land* how closely the interactions on the artistic and environmental levels are related. Lines 215 to 217 are reminiscent of his comments on Stravinsky:

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting

The closeness of the relationship between the interactions which Eliot used in his art and the interactions of man and environment in the physical city suggests that an environmental method of examining the city might produce interesting results if applied to *The Waste Land*. The method used recently by Kevin Lynch for urban analysis which led to his book, *The Image of the City*, seems particularly well suited to such an examination. In aiming at a concept of redevelopment which would incorporate the perceptual needs and attitudes of city-dwellers, Lynch, in the surveys which made up his research, drew attention to three components of an environmental image: identity, structure, and meaning:

An environmental image may be analyzed into three components: identity, structure, and meaning. It is useful to abstract these for analysis, if it is remembered that in reality they always appear together. A workable image requires first the identification of an object, which implies its distinction from other things, its recognition as a separable entity. This is called identity, not in the sense of equality with something else, but with the meaning of individuality or oneness. Second, the image must include the spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other objects. Finally, this object must have some meaning for the observer, whether practical or emotional. Meaning is also a relation, but quite a different one from spatial or pattern relation.⁹

The discovery of the meaning of The Waste Land has of course been one of the main burdens of Eliot criticism since the poem's publication. A brief glance at such things as Knoll's Storm over "The Waste Land" provides convincing proof.¹⁰ As a consequence, the search for meaning in the poem will probably reveal little that is new. On the other hand an identification of objects and the discovery of their spatial relations suggest several interesting ways of tracing the poem's dramatic structure. The relevance of Lynch's approach to Eliot's understanding of the city is reflected in a short story which Eliot wrote fairly early in his London career.¹¹ In it Eliot described two characters who, by their thought patterns, demonstrate two different attitudes to city living. Their common desire, so Eliot indicated, was "to apprehend the human soul in its concrete individuality". The one, Eeldrop, collected impressions at random, an operation not unlike Lynch's identification of an object; while the other, Appleplex, gathered facts systematically. Appleplex' use of system suggests, at least in part, the system implied by Lynch's second component, the discovery of spatial relations between objects.

Four basic "objects" can be identified in The Waste Land: the physical space of the city with its environs, streets and particular locations; the temporal space of the city - the various historical eras

suggested by its architecture and nomenclature; the a-temporal space or areas of experience which transcend time and place; and, finally, the social space created by the relationships of the city's inhabitants. Each of these four objects or spaces has, in turn, its own objects, some of which it shares with the other spaces. The relationships of these secondary objects in each space establish the structure of that space. These four spatial structures, each with its own peculiar dramatic movement, interpenetrate at random to create the dramatic tension of the poem as a whole.

Perhaps the most concrete and easily identifiable object of The Waste Land is its physical space. The physical centre of the city is the traditional centre of London, the crossing of London Bridge and the Thames [60 - 65]. In this complex, space (the bridge) and time (the river) meet. The outer periphery of the physical space has the Austrian resort on the Starnbergersee to the south, where the city is, so to speak, present by its absence, where the freedom of escape is possible ("In the mountains, there you feel free" [17]). To the north the periphery reaches Bradford [234] and the newly rich; to the east, Smyrna [209] and the blackmarket; and to the west, the "old West" of Stetson made famous by his Philadelphian hats [69]. A slightly more complex inner circle is established by Richmond and Kew [293] on the west, the Metropole at Brighton in the south [293], and Margate in the east [300], all of which are middle class week-end resorts. The inner circle is closed on the north by the middle class suburb of Highbury [293].

The structure of the poem's physical space becomes more complex within the inner circle as the centre is neared. Man-made tram and rail

lines [292], for instance, connect the northern Highbury and the southern Metropole, while nature's Thames bisects this axis as it flows from Richmond and Kew in the west to Margate in the east. Within this inner circle, as well, complexity transforms more static spatial relations into relations of flow. Flow may be in line with the Thames:

'This music crept by me upon the waters'
 And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
 O City city, I can sometimes hear
 Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
 The pleasant whining of a mandoline
 And a clatter and a chatter from within
 Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
 Of Magnus Martyr hold
 Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.
 [257 - 265]

Flow may also be at right angles to the Thames in a northerly direction:

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, . . .

 Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
 To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
 With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
 [62, 66 - 68]

In each case flow ends at a particular place and time, the here and now of the complex central area of London. This central area, commonly referred to as "the City" because of its location on the original site of London, is the centre of Empire (the "dull" Regent's Canal [189 - 192]), the centre of commerce (the Cannon Street Hotel [213]), and the centre of corruption (Moorgate [296]).

While all roads in the central area lead to the one unspoken shadow of the poem, The Royal Stock Exchange, Eliot chose as the exact centre of the city the individual citizen crossing the Thames over London Bridge. The focus on this centre is achieved through a virtually cinematic technique of close-up detail:

Unreal City
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
 I had not thought death had undone so many.
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

[60 - 65]

The dramatic tension of this image is striking in its compact but manifold intensity. The environment of fog, winter dawn, crowd, and bridge, all pressing in on the individual, by forcing his eyes onto his feet, reduce his personal space, which by nature wishes to extend itself, to a condition of virtual non-existence like the undoing of death. The gradual focus of movement from periphery to centre of the physical space, and the dramatic pressing in of the physical surroundings on the individual at the centre may be said to be vortical. The tension of the dramatic movement reaches its maximum intensity or climax when the individual fixes his eyes on his feet and so succumbs to his environment. The same climax is seen in universal terms later in the poem:

What is the city over the mountains
 Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
 Falling towers
 Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
 Vienna London
 Unreal

[371 - 376]

The interpenetrations of these cities onto one centre, and the interpenetration of that centre with Dante's hell [62 - 64], transform the physical space of the poem into myth. The myth, of the rise and fall of the city, centres on the destruction of the individual citizen by his environment.

The brown fog over the "Unreal City" transforms physical shapes into temporal shadows. Under the fog meet the various Londons and other cities of the past in the simultaneity of a temporal space which is perhaps an objective correlative of Eliot's concept of tradition:

. . . the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show.

Some one said: 'The dead writers are remote from us because we know so much more than they did.' Precisely, and they are that which we know.¹²

Accordingly, the degree of pastness of a place name in The Waste Land lends a certain intensity to its relationship with other places in the temporal space of the poem.

Three basic levels of temporal intensity can be distinguished. At the level of least intensity names closest to the present, like the Cannon Street Hotel, the Metropole, Bradford, Margate, lend a texture of superficial transience, of the immediate present soon to be past and forgotten. Two of these names are associated with Smyrna, an ancient city reduced in the modern consciousness to a mere "pocket full of currants/ C.i.f. London" [210 - 211]. Names of medium historical intensity, that provide in some cases a particular and in others a vague connection with the past, include aristocratic Richmond and Kew; Greenwich Reach, an appropriate temporal object associated as it is with the prime meridian; the Elizabethan Isle of Dogs; and Saxon Highbury. Names of the greatest historical intensity like London itself, or Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and especially Carthage, establish in a general way the limits of recorded, conscious history in The Waste Land. Each name is, as it were, an icon. It re-enacts or recalls the

centre of spatial orientation at a given period of history.

The dramatic tension of the temporal space seems to reach a climax with the mention of Carthage in the quotations from St. Augustine as they interpenetrate with an ironic excerpt from Buddha's Fire Sermon:

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

[307 - 311]

The image of Carthage unites the commercial lust of Phlebas the Phoenician and the carnal lust of Augustine. This emphasis on passion expressed in terms of fire or "burning" is particularly well suited to the sequential nature of time or the temporal space. The significance of the commercial power which Carthage lost to Rome during the Punic Wars (much as London lost its ascendancy to New York during the First World War - neither successor, Rome nor New York, being mentioned in the poem) is underlined by the urgent reference to the battle of Mylae [70]. Tied to the name of Carthage, the home of Phoenician commerce, are, besides Phlebas, men like Eugenides, the "young man carbuncular", and the Bradford Millionaire, all moved by "the profit and loss" [314]. Carnal power also moves these men as it does the personages of the second and third sections of the poem.

This structural relation of carnal and commercial power used to connect the objects of the temporal space is the environment of that space. The expression of these powers in the image of fire emphasizes their environmental dominance over the victims that they control. The consuming fire of passion is in a sense the myth of the anti-structure,

for while it is common to and therefore relates or unites the objects of the temporal space it also expresses the chaotic destruction which has become the fate of those objects.

The vortex and the flame give place and time a mythical context which allows modern man to see himself in universal terms. At two important points in the poem (lines 19 to 30 and 322 to 394), as well as on several minor occasions when lines interrupt a sequence in the form of neurotic interjections, this universality takes over, transcending time and place in the form of an a-temporal space. The extreme concentration on myth and the decreased emphasis on contemporaneity of this space make it a prime manifestation of what Eliot later called the auditory imagination:

What I call the 'auditory imagination' is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality.¹³

The a-temporal space first appears in the poem in lines 19 to 30 where it provides an interesting contrast to the more concrete physical and temporal spaces. The only directional co-ordinates in this state of transcendence are the dead tree, the dry stone, and "this red rock." These primitive instrumentations are perhaps relied upon by the directional sense as a result of a loss of spatial orientation brought on by the sight of "fear in a handful of dust". When the a-temporal space is perceived in depth later in lines 322 to 394 there is again only "Rock and no water", but among the rocks which now are expanded to

include mountains there winds a "sandy" white road, which leads, with the odd intrusions of more conscious elements — "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/ Vienna London/ Unreal" — to "the empty chapel". This chapel becomes an excellent example of the universality or abstraction from time and place of the a-temporal space as achieved by the auditory imagination if taken as an echo of the Dantean wrath aroused in Eliot by the proposed destruction of certain London Churches:

To one who, like the present writer, passes his days in this City of London (quand'io sentii chiavar l'uscio di sotto) the loss of these towers, to meet the eye down a grimy lane, and of these empty naves, to receive the solitary visitor at noon from the dust and tumult of Lombard Street will be irreparable and forgotten.¹⁴

The echo of Ezekiel in line 20 (again the auditory imagination at work) suggests that Eliot used the apocalyptic imagery of the Hebrew-Christian tradition to create the a-temporal space at least up to the point where the empty chapel is reached. W.R. Lethaby, a contemporary considered important by Eliot and his colleagues, quoted a passage from the apocryphal Book of Enoch in Architecture, Nature and Magic which seems to suggest an apocalyptic correspondence to Eliot's perception:

They carried me to a lofty mountain, the top of which reached heaven. And I beheld the receptacles of light and of thunder I saw also the mouths of all rivers. Then I surveyed the receptacles of all the winds, the stone which supports the corners of the earth, also the four winds which bear up the earth and the firmament of heaven, the winds that turn the sky, which cause the sun and all the stars to set, the winds that support the clouds. I saw the path of angels. I perceived at the extremity of the earth the firmament of heaven above it. Then I passed towards the south, where burnt six mountains formed of glorious stones; three towards the east and three towards the south. Those towards the south were red. The middle one (the seventh) reached to heaven like the throne of God; composed of alabaster, the top of which was sapphire.¹⁵

The structure of the a-temporal space is a movement upwards (perhaps related to Dante's Purgatorio and the pattern of the stairs

in Ash Wednesday) from the dessicated flats, up through the dry mountains to the empty chapel where the moment of extreme dramatic tension is reached with "a flash of lightning". From this point, where the cock presumably looks to the east and the ancient traditions of Hindu mythology, the structural movement is downwards, apparently following "Ganga" to a shore which, through a similarity in phrasing, may be the shore of the "dull canal", Regent's Canal, of line 189. The voice of the thunder along the downward path commands the personal decisions - give, sympathise, control - to those who would explore the space's mythic transcendence. The myth of the mountain (the upward and then downward movement of the space) contrasts the physical vortex and the temporal fire. The environment of the mountain is one which dominates only in order to set free. The individual, instead of being captured or consumed, is given the power of choice.

The fourth and final object of the poem is the social space, which, because it involves a mythic awareness of the human person, is intimately related to the element of personal decision characteristic of the a-temporal space. Outside of the incidental characters, like Stetson who is associated with a particular place, or like Sweeney associated with a particular time, the main social space is perceived through the myths of the Tarot cards, the game of chess, and the machine. What is apparent is that the object of Eeldrop's and Appleplex' quest, "the human soul in its concrete individuality" is not to be found unless perhaps in the person reading the poem.

The Tarot cards [43 - 59] suggest that the personages perceived are not individual entities, but types voided of their humanity and

for this reason indistinguishable from one another and therefore constitutive of only one space. Eliot made this dimension of the social space clear in his notes:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character', is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem.¹⁶

As it happens, then, Madame Sosostris's census of the population of The Waste Land is from one point of view a waste of time. Just the blank card would do nicely. What happens to each happens to all. Each (for each participates in Tiresias' powers) sees what happens to himself as it happens. What is seen, what happens, is a blank (for Tiresias is blind).

"A Game of Chess" reflects the same image of blankness in the aimlessness of the woman in the dressing room and in lines such as: "'Do/'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember/'Nothing?' [120 - 122]; and, "'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'" [127]. As well, the dialogue of the wives of the demobilised pawns, framed by the voice of the bartender reflects the involvement of large numbers of people in the same fate. The cogs which free soldiers from the army turn other cogs on all levels of society with a fateful inevitability.

The degree to which personal actions have taken on a mechanical character is explored in "The Fire Sermon". The very act of life is so devoid of personal contact that it is an act of omission rather than one of commission. Love-making has become simply an unconscious gambit for end-game. Again the emphasis is on emptiness and the

involuntary meshing of cogs that connect people's lives in a system that can only be called closed.

Blankness and the interconnection of the personages in the poem is brought to a climax as "Death by Water" returns the focus to the Tarot cards and in particular to "the drowned Phoenician Sailor" of line 47. Like the citizen on London Bridge caught in the vortex of the physical environment, "Phlebas the Phoenician" is seen "Entering the whirlpool" [319]. His death is universally applicable to those who, like Phlebas, are moved by "the profit and loss" of line 314:

Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.
[319 - 321]

The image of the wheel expresses the interconnection of the personages of the poem if they are seen as fixed in different positions on the wheel of fate which they collectively turn (the Tarot's wheel of fate, as it were, which inspired line 56: "I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring"). The death of Phlebas is the inevitable consequence of being fixed on the wheel with the others. Eliot described this inevitability as he found it in The Changeling by Thomas Middleton (whose extensive use of the chess image in Women Beware Women influenced Eliot's use of the same image in lines 137 to 138):

The tragedy of The Changeling is an eternal tragedy, as permanent as Œdipus or Antony and Cleopatra: it is the tragedy of the not naturally bad but irresponsible and undeveloped nature, caught in the consequences of its own action. In every age and in every civilization there are instances of the same thing: the unmoral nature, suddenly trapped in the inexorable toils of morality - of morality not made by man but by Nature - and forced to take the consequences of an act which it had

planned light-heartedly. Beatrice is not a moral creature; she becomes moral only by becoming damned. Our conventions are not the same as those which Middleton assumed for his play. But the possibility of that frightful discovery of morality remains permanent.¹⁷

As Beatrice becomes moral in her damnation, so the personages of The Waste Land become, through Phlebas' death, a moral lesson for the reader. The reader, unlike Phlebas, can detach himself from the wheel or deterministic social space of the poem, and instead of looking "to windward" can look at the environment. Consequently there is a further dimension to the social space of the poem, a dimension which lies in the reader himself. The vortex, the fire, the mountain, and the wheel ultimately find their completed structural inter-relationship outside the poem. As Eliot observed long after he wrote The Waste Land the key to dramatic tension lies in the audience, within whose range of experience the conventions of the conflict must lie in order that those conventions may have significance. It may well be for this reason that Eliot shifted the structure of his playcraft from the ritualistic to the prevailing conventions of the proscenium stage:

The tension within the society may become also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual: the clash of duties in Antigone, which is not simply a clash between piety and civil obedience, or between religion and politics, but between conflicting laws within what is still a religious-political complex, represents a very advanced stage of civilization: for the conflict must have meaning in the audience's experience before it can be made articulate by the dramatist and receive from the audience the response which the dramatist's art requires.¹⁸

An understanding of the reader's role in the social and other spaces of the poem is ultimately necessary to an understanding of the poem as a whole. To come to some understanding of the reader's role it is helpful to look at certain of Eliot's metaphysical and moral statements, particularly those on the soul, written near or during the period of

the composition of The Waste Land.

In order "to apprehend" the soul in its individuality Eeldrop and Appleplex parked themselves across from a police station to see both those apprehended by the Law and the reactions of the surrounding neighborhood. What Eeldrop and Appleplex apprehended can be reduced in part at least to what Eliot described F.H. Bradley as discovering about the soul through philosophy:

No phase in a particular consciousness is merely a phase in that consciousness, but it is always and essentially a member of a further whole of experience, which passes through and unites the states of many consciousnesses.¹⁹

Line 76 of The Waste Land, "'You! hypocrite lecteur! - mon semblable, - mon frere!'" would seem to suggest that Bradley's discovery can be applied to the reader of the poem. The reader, as fellow conspirator with the writer, puts on a personage from the social space, or the space as a whole, or, for that matter, any of the spaces, so that such personage or space becomes a phase of that particular reader's consciousness. That phase is "essentially a member of a further whole of experience" which is the reader himself, and "which passes through and unites the states of many consciousnesses" that make up the several spaces of the poem. In other words, a personage of the social space, for instance, is a kind of disguise or skin which the reader is meant to put on. The reader gives life to or projects his or her soul into, say, the queen in the solitary personal space of her dressing room in lines 77 to 138; or into the wives of the demobilized pawns in lines 139 to 172. Through these wives the reader talks, in the public space of a saloon, about things that sex-machines (mechanical

brides? ²⁰) talk about. Through Tiresias the reader gazes into the private space of the lovers in "The Fire Sermon" as they work with mechanical precision to bring the game of chess to check-mate [215 - 256]. Because Tiresias unites all the personages of the poem and therefore is the social space, his is a kind of tribal skin which the reader can put on to achieve total awareness: "What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem".²¹

The fact that the reader can wear the various pelts that constitute the tribal skin is important, for this capability means that he is something more than his experience, and is, at the same time, not simply a jack-in-the-box, the lid of which is permanently closed. The root of this concept in Eliot's thinking would seem to be reflected in his discussion of Bradley's analysis of the soul:

If we insist upon thinking of the soul as something wholly isolated, as merely a substance with states, then it is hopeless to attempt to arrive at the conception of other souls. For if there are other souls, we must think of our own soul as more intimately attached to its own body than to the rest of its environment; we detach and idealize some of its states. We thus pass to the point of view from which the soul is the entelechy of its body. It is this transition from one point of view to another which is known to Mr. Bradley's readers as transcendence.²²

In so far as no soul makes sense alone but virtually demands the existence of other souls, it is on its own level involved in a city situation. As may be deduced from E. Martin Browne's remarks on Eliot's final creative production, The Elder Statesman, the relationship between the city and the soul had an enduring importance for Eliot:

The process of [Eliot's] play is, by daring to strip off the mask, to find the identity.

Correspondingly, the action in Oedipus is large; the sins of the past are great sins, the conflicts of the present concern whole cities. The action in Eliot's play is small, and Claverton is aware of this:

It's hard to make other people realize
The magnitude of things that appear to them petty.

(Collected Plays, p.345)

For the small things are great in the terms of Eliot's play, where the true sphere of the action is the battle for a soul.²³

The transcendence which makes the soul an urban entity is a faculty which makes the reader not only an essential element of The Waste Land but of any poetry: "The reader's interpretation may differ from the author's and be equally valid - it may even be better".²⁴ Indeed transcendence finds an apt expression in the relationship between reader and writer as they share the same environment which is the poem. Given the strongly moral character of The Waste Land as reflected in its original title, He do the Police in Different Voices,²⁵ the relationship between Eliot and his reader indicates the moral quality that transcendence had for Eliot as poet. He who did the voices felt he had a particular responsibility, for his concern "to purify the dialect of the tribe"²⁶ had much to do with the facility and honesty with which souls can communicate. This moral lesson Eliot was preaching publicly in 1922 in the voice of Baudelaire, the same voice he used in The Waste Land to induct the reader into the poem:

As for the verse of the present time, the lack of curiosity in technical matters, of the academic poets of today (Georgian et cætera) is only an indication of their lack of curiosity in moral matters. On the other hand, the poets who consider themselves most opposed to Georgianism, and who know a little French, are mostly such as could imagine the Last Judgement only as a lavish display of Bengal lights, Roman candles, catherine wheels, and inflammable fire-balloons. Vous, hypocrite lecteur . . .²⁷

The dramatic structure of the social space is, then expressed in terms of the movement of the wheel of fate and the reader's relationship to the wheel. The structure moves to its climax or point of highest

dramatic tension with the death of Phlebas, a succumbing to the environment constituted by those who, like Phlebas, turn the wheel on which they are fixed. As Phlebas, and the civilization he represents, presumably caused the death of those who preceded him, so those who are to follow cause his death. The reader is, in turn, shown a method of detachment from the wheel by what follows - in the journey through the a-temporal space of the final section of the poem. As the entire Indo-European religious-political complex is coded into the language of the Thunder (Da, Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyatta [400 - 422]) the space is at once a-temporal and social - the voice of heaven. If the human soul decides to gesture outward in response to these simple commands then perhaps it can be apprehended "in its concrete individuality". The reader's role in the poem may consequently be expressed as the voice of the Thunder, but the climax of his relationship to the poem, as well as the entire nature of that relationship, lie outside the poem. The poem simply makes such a relationship possible according to Eliot's artistic and moral principles at the time of its composition.

The four objects, the physical, temporal, a-temporal and social spaces, which can be identified in The Waste Land, and the spatial relations which give the dramatic structure of the vortex, the fire, the mountain, and the wheel and thunder to each of those spaces respectively, express in terms of a dramatic myth the struggle between man and his city environment. The dramatic tension inherent in man's interaction with the city is paralleled by the interpenetration of contemporaneity and antiquity which transforms the poem into myth, and by the interaction of the reader and the poem - the poem acting as a mythic city

environment and the reader as its mythic citizen.

The Waste Land would seem to be, in relation to Eliot's other city poetry, a transition from perception or description of city experience to involvement or the willed actions of city-dwellers, as developed in the plays. There are four general image patterns under which it is possible to examine the more pertinent aspects of simply descriptive city poetry. These patterns range from a totally objective view of the city including the exterior and interior appearance of its buildings, to the more subjective patterns of consciousness of the city-dwellers and the faces or appearances which mask those patterns.

Poems which seem to have as their main object of perception the external aspect of the city are: "Preludes", "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", "Morning at the Window", "The Boston Evening Transcript", "A Cooking Egg", the first three sections of "Five Finger Exercises", and Part Three of "Burnt Norton". These poems, in general, tend to dwell on the less attractive appearances of the city. A city block, the horizon of evening, replaces the forest or plain.²⁸ Streets are usually seen at night when they are nearly deserted, and their lamps beat like fatalistic drums.²⁹ A general view of the city shows a boring sameness which tends to draw the observer into some kind of vortex:

Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question³⁰

The city is given a character not so much by particular buildings as by types of buildings such as Prufrock's "one-night cheap hotels/ and sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells";³¹ or basement kitchens, as in "Morning at the Window".³² And for less reverent city-dwellers there are

too many bells, too many churches.³³

The unpleasant external aspect of the city is matched by its cluttered appearance inside. The walls in "Cooking Egg" are covered with old-fashioned pictures, while the speaker says, in "Portrait of a Lady", "My smile falls heavily among the bric-a-brac".³⁴ Eliot, however, seems usually to leave city interiors unseen, perhaps because most interiors strike city-dwellers that way. Apathy to surroundings seems to be characteristic of such people:

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms³⁵

Environment, then, is involved with perception. A poorly designed living space results in apathy of awareness and the physical aspects of the city reflect the inner consciousness of its citizens:

Only a flicker
Over the strained time-ridden faces
Distracted from distraction by distraction
Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
Tumid apathy with no concentration³⁶

The interior face is featureless. It is the face of "evening spread out against the sky/Like a patient etherised upon a table"³⁷; "conscious but conscious of nothing"³⁸; unable to "bear very much reality".³⁹ There is yet the "flicker/Over the strained time-ridden faces" which suggests that city-dwellers move with the remains of a conscious momentum built up from long-forgotten origins, and become now a series of merely mechanical habits:

O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,

Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees
 Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,
 And dark the Sun and Moon, and the Almanach de Gotha
 And the Stock Exchange Gazette, the Directory of Directors,
 And cold the sense and lost the motive of action.⁴⁰

The emptiness of the interior face of the city-dwellers is reflected in their "strained time-ridden" external faces. The exterior is indeed little more than a mirror of the internal, empty stream of cliché consciousness as in "Prufrock", or "Portrait of a Lady", or "Gerontion". All we know of Prufrock are things such as his balding head and his neat and rich, but modest, clothes,⁴¹ things which indicate a mind concerned not with substance but with impressing others.

Other exterior faces, such as those of "Aunt Helen", "Cousin Nancy", or "Mr. Apollinax", are seen almost totally in terms of their environment. They are, perhaps, more acted upon and shaped by their environment than the reverse. "La Figlia Che Piange", "Burbank with a Baedeker: Blistein with a Cigar", and the Sweeney poems are also concerned, to a degree, with externals. The Sweeney poems provide a portrait of what might be considered the new man who has learned to cope with the city.

Still other characters are seen completely from the outside, as the man and woman in the prose poem, "Hysteria", or the prostitute in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night":

The street-lamp said, 'Regard that woman
 Who hesitates towards you in the light of the door
 Which opens on her like a grin.
 You see the border of her dress
 Is torn and stained with sand,
 And you see the corner of her eye
 Twists like a crooked pin.'⁴²

Such people are more types of city-dwellers than anything approaching an individual like Prufrock. Possibly for this reason they remain nameless.

Two special features of the external aspect of the city-dweller are the potential mob and the situation, features which relate Eliot's city poetry to his plays. Although the mob does not become actual until the Chorus is created for The Rock and Murder in the Cathedral, the common empty-mindedness of people who live in the city is a possible prerequisite for the mob. The "insistent feet/ At four and five and six o'clock"⁴³ are also mob potential, as are "the readers of the Boston Evening Transcript" who "Sway in the wind like a field of ripe corn",⁴⁴ as well as "all the hands/That are raising dingy shades/ In a thousand furnished rooms".⁴⁵

Situation, or group experience, constitutes the final and most important factor in the external aspect of the city-dweller. The medium of the verse drama provides an almost ideal tool for dealing with group experience, for such experience involves consciously willed actions. These actions take place on a social level and concern the working out of some personal destiny. The prime example of situation in Eliot's city poetry is of course The Waste Land. The Waste Land is Eliot's first poem in which willed action ("give, sympathise, control") plays an important role, and the last poem in which the focus on structural patterns of the city is almost entirely on the perceptual or descriptive level.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CITY AS POETIC DRAMA

Eliot's statement, that in a play "the conflict must have meaning in the audience's experience before it can be made articulate by the dramatist and receive from the audience the response which the dramatist's art requires", suggests that any study of Eliot's own plays will require some investigation of Eliot's understanding of his audience and of himself as dramatist.¹ Eliot's audience was, of course, the public of the modern city, or primarily so at least; and this public was at the same time his subject matter. The present chapter, through a study of Eliot's interests in Baudelaire, Elizabethan - Jacobean drama, and the music-hall, will attempt to provide some insight into Eliot's public, in so far as that public meant to Eliot a continuation of a particular moral attitude which for him had transcended time. The following chapter will then go on to outline the "moralist" role in which it seems Eliot cast himself both as poet and as dramatist.

The inspiration from Baudelaire which gave Eliot his style and subject matter also provided him with an audience, for it was through Baudelaire that Eliot discovered the suburb, the home of the public:

. . . besides the stock of images which he used that seems already second-hand, [Baudelaire] gave new possibilities to poetry in a new stock of imagery of contemporary life.

... Au coeur d'un vieux faubourg, labyrinthe fangeux
Ou l'humanité grouille en ferments orageux,
On voit un vieux chiffonnier qui vient, hochant le tête,
Buttant, et se cognant aux murs comme un poète.

This introduces something new, and something universal in modern life... It is not merely in the use of imagery of common life, not merely in the use of imagery of the sordid life of a great metropolis, but in the

elevation of such imagery to the first intensity - presenting it as it is, and yet making it represent something much more than itself - that Baudelaire has created a mode of release and expression for other men.²

Following Baudelaire's cue, Eliot set out to explore the labyrinthine faubourgs of London where he found the vibrant culture of the music-hall and a set of living moral attitudes equivalent to the aesthetics of morality he had discovered in Baudelaire. Vous hypocrite lecteur:

You are not, like myself, students of the popular drama of the faubourgs. And what I there remark is the fixity of morality. The suburban drama has today fundamentally the same morality as it had in the days of Arden of Feversham and The Yorkshire Tragedy. I agree with B about Restoration comedy. It is a great tribute to Christian morality. Take the humour of our great English comedian, Ernie Lotinga. It is (if you like) bawdy. But such bawdiness is a tribute to, an acknowledgment of conventional British morality. I am a member of the Labour Party. I believe in the King and the Islington Empire. I do not believe in the plutocratic St. Moritzers for whom our popular dramatists cater. But what I was saying is that our suburban drama is morally sound, and out of such soundness poetry may come. Human nature does not change. Another port, please.³

Although Eliot was speaking here through a persona in a dialogue with other personae, these remarks, as those of the other personae, were meant to be taken seriously (notwithstanding the self-satirizing remarks about the Labour Party, King, and Islington Empire).⁴ What is clear from the statement is that Baudelaire, the music-hall (Ernie Lotinga), Elizabethan and Restoration drama (and morality) were all of a piece in Eliot's mind, and there formed what in his own words might be called "a religious-political complex".⁵ A consideration of the strands of this complex will elucidate the importance to Eliot of the way of life of his audience.

The association of Baudelaire and morality in Eliot's mind probably derived from Eliot's healthy respect for the moral sense of French culture in general:

Perhaps France will be the last country to be conquered by the mob. A good deal has been said, more by Frenchmen than by foreigners, of journalistic corruption; but perhaps something is to be said for a variety of corruption, if you have newspapers enough, as against uniformity of control in a few hands.

Let us therefore say a word for diversity of opinion. What ultimately matters is the salvation of the individual soul. You may not like this principle; but if you abjure it you may in the end get something that you like less. The world tends now to scramble for its salvation by taking a ticket.⁶

Baudelaire certainly offered Eliot a city's worth of varied corruptions; two varieties in particular were blasphemy and sexual depravity. Baudelaire's blasphemy, as Eliot saw it, was in part Christian:

When Baudelaire's Satanism is dissociated from its less creditable paraphernalia, it amounts to a dim intuition of a part, but a very important part, of Christianity. Satanism itself, so far as not merely an affectation, was an attempt to get into Christianity by the back door. Genuine blasphemy, genuine in spirit and not purely verbal, is the product of partial belief, and is as impossible to the complete atheist as to the perfect Christian. It is a way of affirming belief.⁷

Eliot's remarks on the significance of Baudelaire's attitude to sex indicate a fascination with good and evil on Eliot's part similar to his interest in Elizabethan morality:

Baudelaire has perceived that what distinguishes the relations of man and woman from the copulation of beasts is the knowledge of Good and Evil (of moral Good and Evil which are not natural Good and Bad or Puritan Right and Wrong). Having an imperfect, vague romantic conception of Good, he was at least able to understand that the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than as the natural, 'life-giving', cheery automatism of the modern world. For Baudelaire, sexual operation is at least something not analogous to Kruschen Salts.

So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least, we exist.⁸

The discovery of the knowledge of good and evil, or, "that frightful discovery of morality"⁹ had a threefold significance for Eliot. It was at the same time the seeds of conflict in his drama, the concept

of Original Sin in his ethical thinking, and the cause of his interest in Elizabethan - Jacobean drama. In Eliot's own plays, as will be seen, the seeds of conflict are usually found in confrontation with some past misdemeanor, a confrontation made necessary by the mediocrity of mass culture. In his ethics Eliot seems to have been pleased enough with T.E. Hulme's summary of Original Sin to accept it almost as his own:

T.E. Hulme left behind him a paragraph which Baudelaire would have approved: 'In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with Original Sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never himself be perfect. Certain secondary results in regard to ordinary human action in society follow from this. A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline - ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary.'¹⁰

In Elizabethan - Jacobean drama, Eliot discovered the origins of that living moral tradition which found its contemporary expression in the music-hall entertainment to which he related very strongly.

While Eliot's interest in Baudelaire tended to remain on a somewhat abstract level, his concern with the Elizabethan - Jacobean gives every evidence of an attempt to work out his own practical technique based on fresh principles that were derived from a re-examination of the Elizabethans:

The statement and explication of a conviction about such an important body of dramatic literature [the Elizabethan drama], toward what is in fact the only distinct form of dramatic literature that England has produced, should be something more than an exercise in mental ingenuity or in refinement of taste: it should be something of revolutionary influence on the future of drama. Contemporary literature, like contemporary politics, is confused by the moment-to-moment struggle for existence; but the time arrives when an examination of principles is necessary. I believe that the theatre has reached a point at which a revolution in principles should take place.¹¹

In effect, then, Eliot's concern with Elizabethan life and drama was

one with his concern for contemporary life and drama, and in particular his own drama. The frequent analogies between the two periods which he draws in his work are evidence of the same unity.

The revolution of which Eliot spoke was his answer to his own criticism that "the lack of curiosity in technical matters, of the academic poets of today (Georgian et cætera) is only an indication of their lack of curiosity in moral matters".¹² Eliot's concern with the dramatic technique and morality of the Elizabethans may be seen as an attempt to define an awareness of the "fundamental motions of humanity to good or evil".¹³ His grasp of these motions was one with his understanding of his contemporary public. The present discussion will therefore examine four areas of Elizabethan drama which concerned Eliot: the techniques of language of the Elizabethans, their emotional preoccupations, their methods of developing character, and out of these, their attitudes towards morality. First, however, it will be useful to examine a few of Eliot's comments on the Greeks whom he seems to have regarded as pragens of technical, emotional, and moral accomplishment in drama. At the same time, as the discussion progresses, it will become clear that Eliot had his own audience and the life of the population of a modern metropolis very much in mind while he was looking at the Elizabethans.

Although the Elizabethans were for Eliot a tradition or source to which he wanted to return for the sake of his own vitality, it would be a mistake to think that he held them up as examples of perfection. Indeed, he found in the Elizabethan drama the same faults that he found in contemporary drama, faults whose opposing virtues were to be found in the drama of the Greeks. Eliot used William Archer's book, The Old Drama and the New (Heinemann, 1923) to examine those faults:

Mr. Archer confuses faults with conventions; the Elizabethans committed faults and muddled their conventions. In their plays there are faults of inconsistency, faults of incoherency, faults of taste, there are nearly everywhere faults of carelessness. But their great weakness is the same weakness as that of modern drama, it is the lack of a convention. Mr. Archer facilitates his own task of destruction and avoids offending popular opinion by making an exception of Shakespeare: but Shakespeare, like all his contemporaries, was aiming in more than one direction. In a play of Æschylus, we do not find that certain passages are literature and other passages drama; every style of utterance in the play bears a relation to the whole and because of this relation is dramatic in itself. The imitation of life is circumscribed, and the approaches to ordinary speech and withdrawals from ordinary speech are not without relation and effect upon each other. It is essential that a work of art should be self-consistent, that an artist should consciously or unconsciously draw a circle beyond which he does not trespass: on the one hand actual life is always the material, and on the other hand an abstraction from actual life is a necessary condition to the creation of the work of art.¹⁴

The organic structuring of material in a play of Æschylus, or of just about any Greek playwright so far as Eliot was concerned, simply reflected the Greek attitude to life in general. If Eliot had a utopia, it wasn't far from Athens:

In the Greek tragedy, as Nisard and others have pointed out, the moralizing is not the expression of a conscious 'system' of philosophy; the Greek dramatists moralize only because morals are woven through and through the texture of their tragic idea. Their morals are a matter of feeling trained for generations; they are hereditary and religious, just as their dramatic forms themselves are the development of their early liturgies. Their ethics of thought are one with their ethics of behaviour.¹⁵

One of the reasons for the integrity of the Greek way, the unity of Greek moral feeling, was the transcendence of that feeling above the State. This transcendence is important for it stands in strong contrast to the dominance of the Roman State over the moral feelings of the Roman citizenry. The Roman attitude toward morality affected the Elizabethans very deeply through the influence of Seneca:

The characters of Seneca's plays have no subtlety and no 'private life'. But it would be an error to imagine that they are merely cruder and coarser versions of the Greek originals. They belong to a different race. Their crudity is that which was of the Roman, as compared with the Greek, in real life. The Roman was much the simpler creature. At best, his training was that of devotion to the State, his virtues were public virtues. The Greek knew well enough the idea of the State, but he had also a strong traditional morality which constituted, so to speak, a direct relation between him and the gods, without the mediation of the State, and he had furthermore a sceptical and heterodox intelligence.¹⁶

The direct relation between the Greek and his gods, constituted by his traditional morality, reflects in a very intimate way the direct relation between the Greek dramatist and the reality of which he wrote. Indeed, given that dramatist's direct access to emotions, and given the nature of morality as "feeling trained for generations", it would not be wrong to say that moral attitudes were part of the Greek dramatist's technique, for (in Eliot's eyes) the work, the perception, and the emotion of Greek drama were inseparable:

Behind the dialogue of the Greek drama we are always conscious of a concrete visual actuality and behind that of a specific emotional actuality. Behind the drama of words is the drama of action, the timbre of voice and voice, the uplifted hand or tense muscle, and the particular emotion. The spoken play, the words which we read, are symbols, a shorthand, and often, as in the best of Shakespeare, a very abbreviated shorthand indeed, for the acted and felt play, which is always the real thing. The phrase, beautiful as it may be, stands for a greater beauty still. This is merely a particular case of the amazing unity of Greek, the unity of concrete and abstract in philosophy, the unity of thought and feeling, action and speculation, in life. In the plays of Seneca, the drama is all in the word, and the word has no further reality behind it. His characters all seem to speak with the same voice, and at the top of it; they recite in turn.¹⁷

The Elizabethans, for the most part, lacked such a unity in their drama and in their language. The only Elizabethan play, besides those of Shakespeare, which Eliot seems to have thought at all

comparable with the Greek, and that on the grounds of its permanent moral conflict rather than its technique, was Middleton's The

Changeling:

The tragedy of Beatrice is not that she has lost Alsemero, for whose possession she played; it is that she has won De Flores. Such tragedies are not limited to Elizabethan times: they happen every day and perpetually. The greatest tragedies are occupied with great and permanent moral conflicts: the great tragedies of Aeschylus, of Sophocles, of Corneille, of Racine, of Shakespeare have the same burden. In poetry, in dramatic technique, The Changeling is inferior to the best plays of Webster. But in the moral essence of tragedy it is safe to say that in this play Middleton is surpassed by one Elizabethan alone, and that is Shakespeare. In some respects in which Elizabethan tragedy can be compared to French or to Greek tragedy The Changeling stands above every tragic play of its time, except those of Shakespeare.¹⁸

Elizabethan drama in all its aspects, from technique to moral awareness, provided Eliot with the reality of a tradition related to himself, and in strong contrast with the ideality of the classical tradition of the Greeks. Eliot seems to have accepted and understood this reality precisely in terms of what it possessed or lacked of the Greek virtues of clarity of, and unity of language, emotion, and moral tone. The major source of the abuse of these virtues seems to have been the misuse that was made of Seneca.

Both the popular dramatists and their opponents, the Senecals (who purported to be adhering closely to the Senecan model) were at fault:

Where the popular playwrights travestied Seneca's melodrama and his fury, the Senecals travesty his reserve and his decorum. And as for the language, that, too, is a different interpretation of Seneca. How vague are our notions of bombast and rhetoric when they must include styles and vocabularies so different as those of Kyd and Daniel! It is by opposite excesses that Senecals and popular dramatists attract the same reproach.¹⁹

One of the major weaknesses of the Elizabethans was, then, a fault in technique. In contrast to the direct relation of the Greek work to the Greek actuality, the Elizabethans, in careless imitation of Seneca, suffered from an excess of rhetoric and bombast. This excess was a fault not unlike that of certain modern writers but was, at least in the case of the Elizabethans, simply a condition which preceded, and out of which grew, a more mature style:

At the present time there is a manifest preference for the 'conversational' in poetry - the style of 'direct speech', opposed to the 'oratorical' and rhetorical; but if rhetoric is any convention of writing inappropriately applied, this conversational style can and does become a rhetoric - or what is supposed to be a conversational style, for it is often as remote from polite discourse as well could be. Much of the second and third rate in American vers libre is of this sort; and much of the second and third rate in English Wordsworthianism. There is in fact no conversational or other form which can be applied indiscriminately; if a writer wishes to give the effect of speech he must positively give the effect of himself talking in his own person or in one of his roles; and if we are to express ourselves, our variety of thoughts and feelings, on a variety of subjects with inevitable rightness, we must adapt our manner to the moment with infinite variations. Examination of the development of Elizabethan drama shows this progress in adaptation, a development from monotony to variety, a progressive refinement in the perception of the variations of feeling, and a progressive elaboration of the means of expressing these variations. This drama is admitted to have grown away from the rhetorical expression, the bombast speeches, of Kyd and Marlowe to the subtle and dispersed utterance of Shakespeare and Webster. But this apparent abandonment or out growth of rhetoric is two things: it is partly an improvement in language and it is partly progressive variation in feeling.²⁰

Because of the importance to Eliot of the connection between language and feeling it will be of some advantage to examine Eliot's remarks on two particular Elizabethan dramatists, Massinger and Marston, who were respectively weak and strong in this fundamental element of dramatic technique. Massinger's weakness lay in the fact that his "feeling for language had outstripped his feeling for things;

. . . his eye and his vocabulary were not in co-operation. One of the greatest distinctions of several of his elder contemporaries - we name Middleton, Webster, Tourneur - is a gift for combining, for fusing into a single phrase, two or more diverse impressions".²¹

Massinger so learned to control his language that he virtually separated it from sense awareness or feeling:

It is not that the word becomes less exact. Massinger is, in a wholly eulogistic sense, choice and correct. And the decay of the senses is not inconsistent with a greater sophistication of language. But every vital development in language is a development of feeling as well. The verse of Shakespeare and the major Shakespearian dramatists is an innovation of this kind, a true mutation of species. The verse practised by Massinger is a different verse from that of his predecessors; but it is not a development based on, or resulting from, a new way of feeling. On the contrary, it seems to lead us away from feeling altogether.²²

Eliot seems to have attributed Massinger's movement away from feeling to the presence of "received ideas" and therefore to the lack of immediate perceptions, or to what Eliot called "cerebral anaemia":

Massinger does not confuse metaphors, or heap them one upon another. He is lucid, though not easy. But if Massinger's age, 'without being exactly corrupt, lacks moral fibre', Massinger's verse, without being exactly corrupt, suffers from cerebral anaemia. To say that an involved style is necessarily a bad style would be preposterous. But such a style should follow the involutions of a mode of perceiving, registering, and digesting impressions which is also involved. It is to be feared that the feeling of Massinger is simple and overlaid with received ideas. Had Massinger had a nervous system as refined as that of Middleton, Tourneur, Webster, or Ford, his style would be a triumph. But such a nature was not at hand, and Massinger precedes, not another Shakespeare, but Milton.²³

With John Marston, on the other hand, "we have to do with a positive, powerful and unique personality".²⁴ Marston possessed to such a high degree the gift "for fusing into a single phrase, two or more diverse impressions" that it was a characteristic of his work as a whole:

His is an original variation of that deep discontent and rebelliousness so frequent among the Elizabethan dramatists. He is, like some of the greatest of them, occupied in saying something else than appears in the literal actions and characters whom he manipulates.²⁵

The technique of saying two things at once, or, on the level of the play as a whole, the doubleness of pattern, seems to have been the key expression of those fundamental emotions which transcend time, and which Eliot was anxious to discover in the modern metropolis. For this reason Eliot was particularly impressed with Marston's

Sophonisba:

In spite of the tumultuousness of the action, and the ferocity and horror of certain parts of the play, there is an underlying serenity; and as we familiarize ourselves with the play we perceive a pattern behind the pattern into which the characters deliberately involve themselves; the kind of pattern which we perceive in our own lives only at rare moments of inattention and detachment, drowsing in sun light. It is the pattern drawn by what the ancient world called Fate; subtilized by Christianity into mazes of delicate theology; and reduced again by the modern world into crudities of psychological or economic necessity.²⁶

It is possible, then, to conclude that the connection between language and feeling which Eliot valued so highly lay precisely in the ability of the dramatist's language to do at least two things at once. This was of course a principle to which Eliot adhered consistently throughout his career. It was latent in his remarks on Stravinsky and The Golden Bough²⁷; it was the quality of first intensity in Baudelaire which Eliot found to be the essence of the city as a subject for poetry²⁸; and it was closely related to Eliot's use of peripheral vision in his later plays as discussed in such essays as "Poetry and Drama".²⁹ On the basis of such a principle it is possible to understand Eliot's vision of the city as the complex of language, emotions, and moral attitudes which lay behind the buildings, streets, and faces of the city itself. For this reason it is not hard to grasp why Eliot preferred a poetic drama which made such perceptions available, rather than a poetic

drama which did not:

It is possible that what distinguishes poetic drama from prosaic drama is a kind of doubleness in the action, as if it took place on two planes at once. In this it is different from allegory, in which the abstraction is something conceived, not something differently felt, and from symbolism (as in the plays of Maeterlinck) in which the tangible world is deliberately diminished - both symbolism and allegory being operations of the conscious planning mind. In poetic drama a certain apparent irrelevance may be the symptom of this doubleness; or the drama has an under-pattern, less manifest than the theatrical one. We sometimes feel, in following the words and behaviour of some of the characters of Dostoevsky, that they are living at once on the plane that we know and on some other plane of reality from which we are shut out: their behaviour does not seem crazy, but rather in conformity with the laws of some world that we cannot perceive. More fitfully, and with less power, this doubleness appears here and there in the work of Chapman, especially in the two Bussy D'Ambois plays. In the work of genius of a lower order, such as that of the author of The Revenger's Tragedy, the characters themselves hardly attain this double reality; we are aware rather of the author, operating perhaps not quite consciously through them, and making use of them to express something of which he himself may not be quite conscious.

It is not by writing quotable 'poetic' passages, but by giving us the sense of something behind, more real than any of his personages and their action, that Marston established himself among the writers of genius.³⁰

Poetic drama of the first intensity, of doubleness of pattern, is a drama in which the technique of language is adequate for the emotional expression: "What every poet starts from is his own emotions".³¹ The more language lends itself to feeling the better that language is, the more developed and alive. It is this primacy of emotional perception which distinguishes Shakespeare and Dante as great poets:

The great poet, in writing himself, writes his time. Thus Dante, hardly knowing it, became the voice of the thirteenth century; Shakespeare, hardly knowing it, became the representative of the end of the sixteenth century, of a turning point in history. But you can hardly say that Dante believed, or did not believe, the Thomist philosophy; you can hardly say that Shakespeare believed, or did not believe, the mixed and muddled scepticism of the Renaissance. If Shakespeare had written according to a better philosophy, he would have written worse poetry; it was his business

to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time, based on whatever his time happened to think. Poetry is not a substitute for philosophy or theology or religion, as Mr. Lewis and Mr. Murray sometimes seem to think; it has its own function. But as this function is not intellectual but emotional, it cannot be defined adequately in intellectual terms. We can say that it provides 'consolation': strange consolation, which is provided equally by writers so different as Dante and Shakespeare.³²

The underlying pattern (which vital emotional perception made possible) very likely meant to Eliot the voice of the time. It was a voice which, although it did not possess "meaning", nevertheless manifested its own kind of significance:

I would suggest that none of the plays of Shakespeare has a 'meaning', although it would be equally false to say that a play of Shakespeare is meaningless. All great poetry gives the illusion of life. When we enter into the world of Homer, or Sophocles, or Virgil, or Dante, or Shakespeare, we incline to believe we are apprehending something that can be expressed intellectually; for every precise emotion tends towards intellectual formulation.³³

The primacy of emotions over the intellect in poetry was a principle which involved Eliot in a titanic quarrel which it will be the burden of the next chapter to explore. Very simply, the primacy of emotions meant the primacy of moral awareness, and certain of Eliot's friends did not like to see him in the role of a moralist. For the moment it is only necessary to observe that the underlying pattern (the "illusion of a view of life" which vital emotional perception made possible, and which tended to intellectual formulation) was a pattern of universality, or a pattern of fundamental human feeling which transcended time. This transcendent pattern made the Elizabethan texts a fit instrument of perception with which to view the fundamental emotions at play in the metropolis of Eliot's own time. That Eliot looked at the Elizabethans with one eye on his own time will become

increasingly obvious during the following examination of his remarks on the Elizabethan temperament. At the same time, as another indication of Eliot's concern with the city, it should be noted that these remarks bear a striking affinity to the foregoing remarks on Baudelaire.

One of the chief reasons the Elizabethans excited in Eliot an awareness of the universal in human feeling was the sense of permanence with which they accepted their own age. Theirs was not a social drama but a human drama:

In Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and even in the comedy of Congreve and Wycherley, there is almost no analysis of the particular society of the times, except in so far as it records the rise of the City families, and their ambition to ally themselves with needy peerages and to acquire country estates. Even that rise of the City, in Eastward Hoe and Michaelmas Term, is treated lightly as a foible of the age, and not as a symptom of social decay and change. It is indeed in the lack of this sense of a "changing world", of corruptions and abuses peculiar to their own time, that the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists are blessed. We feel that they believed in their own age, in a way in which no nineteenth- or twentieth-century writer of the greatest seriousness has been able to believe in his age. And accepting their age, they were in a position to concentrate their attention, to their respective abilities, upon the common characteristics of humanity in all ages, rather than upon the differences. We can partly criticize their age through our study of them, but they did not so criticize it themselves. In the work of Shakespeare as a whole, there is to be read the profoundest, and indeed one of the most sombre studies of humanity that has ever been made in poetry; though it is in fact so comprehensive that we cannot qualify it as a whole as either glad or sorry. We recognize the same assumption of permanence in his minor fellows. Dante held it also, and the great Greek dramatists. In periods of unsettlement and change we do not observe this: it was a changing world which met the eyes of Lucian or of Petronius. But in the kind of analysis in which Shakespeare was supreme the other Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists differed only in degree and comprehensiveness.³⁴

Eliot's denial here of any direct connection between the social change from country to city orientation and the universality with which Elizabethans viewed humanity reflects a similar denial in his essay on Thomas Middleton written several years earlier. If, therefore, these two factors could not be directly connected in Eliot's mind, they were,

nevertheless, closely associated:

As a social document the comedy of Middleton illustrates the transition from government by a landed aristocracy to government by a city aristocracy gradually engrossing the land. As such it is of the greatest interest. But as literature, as a dispassionate picture of human nature, Middleton's comedy deserves to be remembered chiefly by its real - perpetually real - and human figure of Moll the Roaring Girl. That Middleton's comedy was 'photographic', that it introduces us to the low life of the time far better than anything in the comedy of Shakespeare or the comedy of Jonson, better than anything except the pamphlets of Dekker and Greene and Nashe, there is little doubt. But it produced one great play - The Roaring Girl - a great play in spite of the tedious long speeches of some of the principal characters, in spite of the clumsy machinery of the plot: for the reason that Middleton was a great observer of human nature, without fear, without sentiment, without prejudice.³⁵

Predominant among the universal emotions of the Elizabethans was the emotion of horror, or, as Eliot called it, "the Tragedy of Blood".³⁶ It is tempting to think that the upheaval of nature and the dislocation of man from his natural roots, both important characteristics of such drama, were strongly related to the shift of power from country to city; Eliot, however, refused to draw such a conclusion. He simply recognized the importance of the puzzling fact that this concentration on the universal emotion of horror was a preoccupation peculiar to the Elizabethans:

If we wished to find the reason for the sanguinary character of much Elizabethan drama - which persists to its end - we should have to allow ourselves some daring generalizations concerning the temper of the epoch. When we consider it, and reflect how much more refined, how much more classical in the profounder sense, is that earlier popular drama which reached its highest point in Everyman, I cannot but think that the change is due to some fundamental release of restraint. The tastes gratified are always latent: they were then gratified by the drama, as they are now gratified by crime reports in the daily press.³⁷

Eliot's interest in the emotion of horror of the Elizabethans is particularly important; for, while it closely reflected his interest

in Baudelaire (and also his rather quixotic and obscure interest in detective thrillers) it reflected even more his interest in morality. Blood was almost a convention in Elizabethan drama: but, paradoxically it was also a probe which searched out the limits of human action and reaction (moral conduct and moral feeling) as probably no other probe could. The Tragedy of Blood was not simply a style borrowed in the manner of a classical imitation of Seneca, as Eliot accused some scholars of thinking. Seneca merely provided patterns which the probe might or might not follow as its user chose:

If the taste for horror was a result of being trained on Seneca, then it has neither justification nor interest; if it was something inherent in the people and in the age, and Seneca merely the excuse and precedent, then it is a phenomenon of interest. Even to speak of Seneca as offering a precedent and excuse is probably to falsify; for it implies that the Elizabethans would otherwise have been a little uneasy in conscience at indulging such tastes - which is ridiculous to suppose. They merely assumed that Seneca's taste was like their own - which is not wholly untrue; and that Seneca represented the whole of classical antiquity - which is quite false. Where Seneca took part is in affecting the type of plot; he supported one tendency against another. But for Seneca, we might have had more plays in the Yorkshire Tragedy mould; that is to say, the equivalent of the News of the World murder report; Seneca, and particularly the Italianized Seneca, encouraged the taste for the foreign, remote, or exotic.³⁸

Eliot found a very particular example of the taste for horror in The Revenger's Tragedy of Cyril Tourneur, a play which "can, in this respect, be compared only to Hamlet".³⁹ A preferred comparison, however, was with the work of Swift:

We may think as we read Swift, 'how loathsome human beings are'; in reading Tourneur we can only think, 'how terrible to loathe human beings so much as that'. For you cannot make humanity horrible merely by presenting human beings as consistent and monotonous maniacs of gluttony and lust.⁴⁰

Tourneur presented Eliot with an outstanding example of a poet who started with his own emotions, and those of a most fearful kind.

Tourneur's emotions were so desperate, in fact, that they came close to a complete universalization or transcendence of time and place:

So the play [The Revenger's Tragedy] is a document on humanity chiefly because it is a document on one human being, Tourneur; its motive is truly the death motive, for it is the loathing and horror of life itself. To have realized this motive so well is a triumph; for the hatred of life is an important phase - even, if you like, a mystical experience - in life itself.⁴¹

Furthermore, the apparent reason for the importance of Tourneur's vision of horror was that this horror was itself the source of dramatic unity, and therefore, by inference, the element which aligned the Elizabethan drama with that of the Greek. In Eliot's remarks on the unifying force of horror it is interesting to note the close relationship between emotional strength and youth (not to mention the similarity of these remarks to those of Eliot about his own youth in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism⁴²):

[The Revenger's Tragedy] does express - and this, chiefly, is what gives it its amazing unity - an intense and unique and horrible vision of life; but is such a vision as might come, as the result of few or slender experiences, to a highly sensitive adolescent with a gift for words. We are apt to expect of youth only a fragmentary view of life; we incline to see youth as exaggerating the importance of its narrow experience and imagining the world as did Chicken Licken. But occasionally the intensity of the vision of its own ecstasies or horrors, combined with a mastery of word and rhythm, may give to a juvenile work a universality which is beyond the author's knowledge of life to give, and to which mature men and women can respond.⁴³

The Tragedy of Blood tends, Eliot thought, to take life and its emotions to their extremes, and, as a result, to explore their moral character. Consequently, it is not a difficult jump at all to understand Eliot's insistence on the close relationship between morality and emotion. It was the moral structuring of emotion which in Eliot's eyes made characterization possible at all:

The Elizabethan morality was an important convention; important because it was not consciously of one social class alone, because it provided a framework for emotions to which all classes could respond, and it hindered no feeling. It was not hypocritical, and it did not suppress; its dark corners are haunted by the ghost of Mary Fitton and perhaps greater. It is a subject which has not been sufficiently investigated. Fletcher and Massinger rendered it ridiculous; not by not believing it, but because they were men of great talents who could not vivify it; because they could not fit into it passionate, complete human characters.⁴⁴

Elizabethan morality was in part a convention of conscious manners and in part a convention of more or less unconscious emotional attitudes. Philip Massinger neglected the emotional convention and as a result reduced the moral commitment of his dramatic characters to a habit of cliché moralizing:

What may be considered corrupt or decadent in the morals of Massinger is not an alteration or diminution in morals; it is simply the disappearance of all the personal and real emotions which this morality supported and into which it introduced a kind of order. As soon as the emotions disappear the morality which ordered it appears hideous. Puritanism itself became repulsive only when it appeared as the survival of a restraint after the feelings which it restrained had gone. When Massinger's ladies resist temptation they do not appear to undergo any important emotion; they merely know what is expected of them; they manifest themselves to us as lubricious prudes. Any age has its conventions; and any age might appear absurd when its conventions get into the hands of a man like Massinger - a man, we mean, of so exceptionally superior a literary talent as Massinger's, and so paltry an imagination.⁴⁵

Massinger's work was emotionally dry simply because he adopted the conscious manners of Elizabethan morality, and, without making those manners or conventions his own, merely filled in the spaces which they provided. Massinger's drama lacked that dependence on his own moral feelings which a living perception of morality must have:

It is suggested, then, that a dramatic poet cannot create characters of the greatest intensity of life unless his personages, in their reciprocal actions and behaviour in their story are somehow dramatizing, but in no obvious form, an action or struggle for harmony in the soul of the poet.⁴⁶

Eliot's understanding of the morality of the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama depended on his understanding of characterization.

The key word in characterization, for Eliot, was unity. Elizabethan morality provided a framework for and unified the emotional life of the different social classes of the time. But, the life of a particular character depended on an "emotional unity" given it by the author:

Mr. Cruickshank, Coleridge, and Leslie Stephen are pretty well agreed that Massinger is no master of characterization. You can, in fact, put together heterogeneous parts to form a lively play; but a character, to be living, must be conceived from some emotional unity. A character is not to be composed from scattered observations of human nature, but of parts which are felt together. Hence it is that although Massinger's failure to draw a moving character is no greater than his failure to make a whole play, and probably springs from the same defective sensitiveness, yet the failure in character is more conspicuous and more disastrous. A 'living' character is not necessarily 'true to life'. It is a person whom we can see and hear, whether he be true or false to human nature as we know it. What the creator of character needs is not so much knowledge of motives as keen sensibility; the dramatist need not understand people; but he must be exceptionally aware of them.⁴⁷

Emotional unity applied not only to the individual character but to the entire field of characterization within a play. Such a concept reflected the reliance of Elizabethan morality on the unity of the classes in Elizabethan England. The same concept also reflected the pre-eminent unity of Greek drama with Greek morality. This unity of moral field was quite unsurpassed in the work of Shakespeare,⁴⁸ but seemed, for Eliot, more readily exemplified in the work of Ben Jonson.

Though Eliot saw Jonson's characters as lacking a depth or "third dimension"⁴⁹ present in the characters of Shakespeare, Webster, and Tourneur, Eliot felt this lack was not a fault but simply Jonson's method of achieving unity of field. Each man creates his own world with his own emotions, and in his own particular way:

. . . the superficialities of Jonson is solid. It is what it is; it does not pretend to be another thing. But it is so very conscious and deliberate that we must look with eyes alert to the whole before we apprehend the significance of any part. We cannot call a man's work superficial when it is the creation of a world: a man cannot be accused of dealing superficially with the world which he himself has created; the superficialities is the world. Jonson's characters conform to the logic of the emotions of their world. They are not fancy, because they have a logic of their own; and this logic illuminates the actual world, because it gives us a new point of view from which to inspect it.⁵⁰

Another important aspect of Elizabethan characterization which Eliot noticed and which it seems appropriate that a twentieth-century writer should notice, was self-consciousness. Self-consciousness implied a moral attitude, for it suggested a character's awareness of being manifested through actions which are judged according to some standard. Self-consciousness was consciousness of self in relation to something else and ultimately in relation to the universe as a whole. Self-consciousness, in other words, as it applied to Shakespeare, for example, was the prime source of unity in a very diverse world:

It has been said that Shakespeare lacks unity; it might, I think, be said equally well that it is Shakespeare chiefly that is the unity, that unifies so far as they could be unified all the tendencies of a time that certainly lacked unity. Unity in Shakespeare, but not universality; no one can be universal: Shakespeare would not have found much in common with his contemporary St. Theresa. What influence the work of Seneca and Machiavelli and Montaigne seems to me to exert in common on that time, and most conspicuously through Shakespeare, is an influence toward a kind of self-consciousness that is new; the self-consciousness and self-dramatization of the Shakespearian hero, of whom Hamlet is only one. It seems to mark a stage, even if not a very agreeable one, in human history, or progress, or deterioration, or change. Roman stoicism was in its own time a development in self-consciousness; taken up into Christianity, it broke loose again in the dissolution of the Renaissance. Nietzsche, as I suggested, is a late variant: his attitude is a kind of stoicism upside-down: for there is not much difference between identifying oneself with the Universe and identifying the Universe with oneself.⁵¹

As this passage would seem to indicate, self-consciousness was the focus of Eliot's concern. It will be seen shortly that for Eliot self-

consciousness was not just the metaphysical observation of a dramatist, but implied a way of life (and therefore a morality).

What must be noted in particular about self-consciousness, as Eliot found it in the Elizabethans, was the facility with which it lent itself to a manifestation of universal human emotions, particularly emotions surrounding death. Eliot cited Chapman, Marston, and especially Shakespeare, as dramatists in whose work self-consciousness played an important role:

. . . there is, in some of the great tragedies of Shakespeare, a new attitude I cannot say that it is Shakespeare's 'philosophy'. Yet many people have lived by it; though it may only have been Shakespeare's instinctive recognition of something of theatrical utility. It is the attitude of self-dramatization assumed by some of Shakespeare's heroes at moments of tragic intensity. It is not peculiar to Shakespeare; it is conspicuous in Chapman: Bussy, Clermont and Biron, all die in this way. Marston - one of the most interesting and least explored of all the Elizabethans - uses it; and Marston and Chapman were particularly Senecan. But Shakespeare, of course, does it very much better than any of the others, and makes it somehow more integral with the human nature of his characters. It is less verbal, more real. I have always felt that I have never read a more terrible exposure of human weakness - of universal human weakness - than the last great speech of Othello. . . . What Othello seems to me to be doing in making this speech is cheering himself up. He is endeavouring to escape reality, he has ceased to think about Desdemona, and is thinking about himself. Humility is the most difficult of all virtues to achieve; nothing dies harder than the desire to think well of oneself. Othello succeeds in turning himself into a pathetic figure, by adopting an aesthetic rather than a moral attitude, dramatizing himself against his environment. He takes in the spectator, but the human motive is primarily to take in himself. I do not believe that any writer has ever exposed this bovarysme, the human will to see things as they are not, more clearly than Shakespeare.⁵²

It is also interesting that Eliot should have found a direct connection of the technical use of language and self-consciousness to bring his theory of the interconnection of language, emotion, and morality full circle:

A speech in a play should never appear to be intended to move us as it might conceivably move other characters in the play, for it is essential that we should preserve our position as spectators, and observe always from the outside though with complete understanding. The scene in Julius Caesar is right because the object of our attention is not the speech of Antony (Bedeutung) but the effect of his speech upon the mob, and Antony's intention, his preparation and consciousness of the effect. And, in the rhetorical speeches from Shakespeare which have been cited, we have this necessary advantage of a new clue to the character, in noting the angle from which he views himself. But when a character in a play makes a direct appeal to us, we are either the victims of our own sentiment, or we are in the presence of a vicious rhetoric.⁵³

To bring this discussion of Eliot's concern with the Elizabethans to a close, there follow a few of his statements on the moral awareness of the Elizabethan dramatists in general. In the first place, Eliot saw Shakespeare as a kind of ethical measuring rod for the other major dramatists. It is interesting to note that Eliot implied that satire itself was a kind of ethic. Perhaps Eliot was rebutting Wyndham Lewis, a self-proclaimed satirist, who accused Eliot of being a moralist:

The ethics of most of the greater Elizabethan dramatists is only intelligible as leading up to, or deriving from, that of Shakespeare: it has its significance, we mean, only in the light of Shakespeare's fuller revelation. There is another type of ethics, that of the satirist. In Shakespeare's work it is represented most nearly by Timon and Troilus, but in a mind with such prodigious capacity of development as Shakespeare's, the snarling vein could not endure. The kind of satire which is approached in The Jew of Malta reaches perhaps its highest point with Volpone; but it is a kind to which also approximates much of the work of Middleton and Tourneur, men who as writers must be counted morally higher than Fletcher or Ford or Heywood.⁵⁴

Secondly, Eliot saw Elizabethan morality in much the same way that he saw Baudelaire's, as an anti-morality:

There were, of course, tendencies toward form. There was a general philosophy of life, if it may be called such, based on Seneca and other influences which we find in Shakespeare as in the others. It is a philosophy which, as Mr. Santayana observed in an essay which passed almost unheeded, may be summarized in the statement that Duncan is in his grave. Even the philosophical basis, the general attitude toward life of the Elizabethans, is one of anarchism, of dissolution, of decay. It is in fact exactly parallel and indeed one and the same thing

with their artistic greediness, their desire for every sort of effect together, their unwillingness to accept any limitation and abide by it. The Elizabethans are in fact a part of the movement of progress or deterioration which has culminated in Sir Arthur Pinero and in the present regiment of Europe.⁵⁵

Thirdly, there is the case of Eliot's particular fascination with Thomas Middleton and, especially, The Changeling. The Changeling seems to have been Eliot's archetypical example of everything involved in human emotion and moral awareness:

For there is no doubt about The Changeling. Like all of the plays attributed to Middleton, it is long-winded and tiresome; the characters talk too much, and then suddenly stop talking and act; they are real and impelled irresistibly by the fundamental motions of humanity to good or evil. This mixture of tedious discourse and sudden reality is everywhere in the work of Middleton, in his comedy also. In The Roaring Girl we read with toil through a mass of cheap conventional intrigue, and suddenly realize that we are, and have been for some time without knowing it, observing a real and unique human being. In reading The Changeling we may think, till almost the end of the play, that we have been concerned merely with a fantastic Elizabethan morality, and then discover that we are looking on at a dispassionate exposure of fundamental passions of any time and any place. The usual opinion remains the just judgement: The Changeling is Middleton's greatest play. The morality of the convention seems to us absurd. To many intelligent readers this play has only an historical interest, and serves only to illustrate the moral taboos of the Elizabethans. The heroine is a young woman who, in order to dispose of a fiancé to whom she is indifferent, so that she may marry the man she loves, accepts the offer of an adventurer to murder the affianced, at the price (as she finds in due course) of becoming the murderer's mistress. Such a plot is, to a modern mind, absurd; and the consequent tragedy seems a fuss about nothing. But The Changeling is not merely contingent for its effect upon our acceptance of Elizabethan good form or convention; it is, in fact, no more dependent upon the convention of its epoch than a play like A Doll's House. Underneath the convention there is the stratum of truth permanent in human nature.⁵⁶

Although Eliot's interest in the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama may have been involved, that interest was not merely an academic one. There was a direct connection between what Eliot found in the language-emotion-morality complex of the Elizabethans and what he found

in the life of a modern metropolis. Consider, for instance, the manner (not unrelated to his theories on tradition) in which he treated Ben Jonson as a contemporary:

If we approach Jonson with less frozen awe of his learning, with a clearer understanding of his 'rhetoric' and its applications, if we grasp the fact that the knowledge required of the reader is not archaeology but knowledge of Jonson, we can derive not only instruction in two-dimensional life - but enjoyment. We can even apply him, be aware of him as a part of our literary inheritance craving further expression. Of all the dramatists of his time Jonson is probably the one whom the present age would find the most sympathetic, if it knew him. There is a brutality, a lack of sentiment, a polished surface, a handling of large bold designs in brilliant colours, which ought to attract about three thousand people in London and elsewhere. At least, if we had a contemporary Shakespeare and a contemporary Jonson, it might be the Jonson who would arouse the enthusiasm of the intelligentsia. Though he is saturated in literature, he never sacrifices the theatrical qualities - theatrical in the most favourable sense to literature or to the study of character. His work is a titanic show. Jonson's masques, an important part of his work, are neglected; our flaccid culture lets shows and literature fade, but prefers faded literature to faded shows.⁵⁷

But not only did Eliot see educated men such as Jonson as his contemporaries, he also felt the population or public of modern London to be similar in temperament and taste to the Elizabethan public. In either public there was a living morality that could be used as a source of inspiration and material by the dramatist. Here indeed was Eliot's city:

In the [Elizabethan] drama we seem to have on the one hand almost the whole body of men of letters, a crowd of scholars coming down from Oxford and Cambridge to pick a poor living in London, needy and often almost desperate men of talent; and on the other an alert, curious, semi-barbarous public, fond of beer and bawdry, including much the same sort of people whom one encounters in the local outlying theatres to-day, craving cheap amusement to thrill their emotions, arouse their mirth and satisfy their curiosity; and between the entertainers and entertained a fundamental homogeneity of race, of sense of humour and sense of right and wrong.⁵⁸

When Eliot spoke of "the local outlying theatres" he was pointing directly at the music halls. As The Encyclopaedia Britannica: Eleventh

Edition makes clear, the music-hall proper resulted from a split in London entertainment caused by the granting of special patents to privileged individuals by Charles II. These patents gave their recipients "power to set up playhouses at any time in any parts of London and Westminster".⁵⁹ As a consequence, those who wanted their traditional entertainment had to go elsewhere:

The theatre proper having emancipated itself from the inn or tavern, it was now the turn of the inn or tavern to develop into an independent place of amusement, and to lay the foundation of that enormous middle-class and lower middle-class institution or interest which we agree to term the music hall. It rose from the most modest, humble and obscure beginning - from the public-house bar-parlour, and its weekly "sing-songs," chiefly supported by voluntary talent from the "harmonic meetings" of the "long-room" upstairs, generally used as a Foresters' or Masonic club-room, where one or two professional singers were engaged and a regular chairman was appointed, to the "assembly-room" entertainments at certain hotels, where private balls and school festivals formed part of an irregular series. The district "tea-garden," which was then an agreeable feature of suburban life - the suburbs being next door to the city and the country next door to the suburbs - was the first to show dramatic ambition, and to erect in some portion of its limited but leafy grounds a lath-and-plaster stage large enough for about eight people to move upon without incurring the danger of falling off into the adjoining fish pond and fountain.⁶⁰

Eliot seems to have supposed that there was a continuity in tavern culture from even pre-Elizabethan times down to his own time, a continuity which included the music-hall. It is not surprising therefore that Eliot should have conjectured a continuity in the patrons of that culture.

Something which is perhaps surprising is a remark by J. Isaacs which takes the music-hall back, in spirit at least, to the days of the phallic comedy of Aristophanes. Isaacs found this phallic element in the work of the music-hall entertainer, Ernie Lotinga, who played at the Islington Empire. Eliot himself mentioned Lotinga (in the

"Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" of 1928) in connection with the morality of the suburban theatres.⁶¹ Isaacs took credit for introducing Eliot to the music-hall:

By then [1928] Mr. Eliot had written his first dramatic piece, Sweeney Agonistes, an Aristophanic Melodrama. He had had his Comic Purgation, and was feeling good. So the tone of his "Dialogue" seems to imply. Whether this purgation came directly from Aristophanes or indirectly from Ernie Lotinga, who is not only bawdy, but a direct descendent of the phallic comedy of Greece and Rome, I do not know. This I do know, that if I have done nothing else for literature, I did at least take Mr. Eliot to see Mr. Ernie Lotinga at the Islington Empire.⁶²

The phallic ritual which developed into the comedy of Aristophanes was, of course, an important influence in the creation of Sweeney Agonistes. Certainly Eliot found elemental human forces in action at the music-hall.

What the music-hall itself meant to Eliot will be seen in the healthy emotions and morality which the music-hall perpetuated and the countering forces of the cinema and escape culture.

The two major factors that made the music-hall so important to Eliot were its use of a definite convention and its provision of the opportunity for audience participation. Both these aspects of the music-hall lent themselves to the presentation and perpetuation of what Eliot thought a very healthy morality.

Convention, especially as used in the music-hall, was of particular importance to Eliot. Eliot criticized both modern and Elizabethan drama for lacking any real conventions.⁶³ One effect of this deficiency was the difficulty which Elizabethan drama presented to the twentieth-century actor:

An actor in an Elizabethan play is either too realistic or too abstract in his treatment, whatever system of speech, of expression and of movement he adopts. The play is for ever betraying him. An Elizabethan play was in some ways as different from a modern play, its performance is almost as much a lost art, as if it were a drama of Æschylus or Sophocles. And in some ways it is more difficult to reproduce. For it is easier to present the effect of something in a firm convention, than the effect of something which was aiming, blindly enough, at something else. The difficulty in presenting Elizabethan plays is that they are liable to be made too modern, or falsely archaic. Why are the asides ridiculous, which Mr. Archer reprehends in A Woman Killed with Kindness? Because they are not a convention, but a subterfuge; it is not Heywood who assumes that asides are inaudible, it is Mrs. Frankford who pretends not to hear Wendoll. A convention is not ridiculous: a subterfuge makes us extremely uncomfortable. The weakness of the Elizabethan drama is not its defect of realism, but its attempt at realism; not its conventions, but its lack of conventions.⁶⁴

One reason for avoiding realism was that it necessitated the intrusion of the actor's personality, a grave artistic error in Eliot's eyes.

The poet or playwright draws on his own emotions in his creativity, and, through the artistic process, transforms those emotions into something entirely different. Similarly, the actor achieves the actual emotions of life, but in the service of the play as a character, not as himself:

In order to make an Elizabethan drama give a satisfactory effect as a work of art, we should have to find a method of acting different from that of contemporary social drama, and at the same time to attempt to express all the emotions of actual life in the way in which they actually would be expressed: the result would be something like a performance of Agamemnon by the Guitrys. The effect upon actors who attempt to specialize in Shakespearian or other seventeenth-century revivals is unfortunate. The actor is called upon for a great deal that is not his business, and is left to his own devices for things in which he should be trained. His stage personality has to be supplied from and confounded with his real personality.⁶⁵

Eliot completes this statement by noting the absolute dependence of realistic drama on the actor's personality:

. . . in realistic drama, which is drama striving steadily to escape the conditions of art, the human being intrudes. Without the human being and without this intrusion, the drama cannot be performed, and

this is as true of Shakespeare as it is of Henry Arthur Jones.⁶⁶

If the anti-formal or anti-conventional elements of realistic drama were anathema to Eliot, what then was he looking for? What were the constituents of conventional drama that led him to accept the music-hall as his source of inspiration? In the first place there was the ideal of Greek drama in which "every style of utterance in the play bears a relation to the whole and because of this relation is dramatic in itself". This "relation", according to Eliot, suggested that the "imitation of life" should be "circumscribed", "self-consistent", and that "an artist should consciously or unconsciously draw a circle beyond which he does not trespass".⁶⁷ Secondly there was the example of ballet. Ballet imposed limitations of characterization which constrained any exhibition of the performer's own personality:

Anyone who has observed one of the great dancers of the Russian school will have observed that the man or woman whom we admire is a being who exists only during the performances, that it is a personality, a vital flame which appears from nowhere, disappears into nothing and is complete and sufficient in its appearance. It is a conventional being, a being which exists only in and for the work of art which is the ballet. A great actor on the ordinary stage is a person who also exists off it and who supplies the role which he performs with the person which he is. A ballet is apparently a thing which exists only as acted and would appear to be a creation much more of the dancer than of the choreographer. This is not quite true. It is a development of several centuries into a strict form. In the ballet only that is left to the actor which is properly the actor's part. The general movements are set for him. There are only limited movements that he can make, only a limited degree of emotion that he can express. He is not called upon for his personality. The differences between a great dancer and a merely competent dancer is [*sic*] in the vital flame, that impersonal, and, if you like, inhuman force which transpires between each of the great dancer's movements.

Thirdly, the music-hall seemed to promise the possibility of an art form that would not alienate the public:

The Elizabethan drama was aimed at a public which wanted entertainment of a crude sort, but would stand a good deal of poetry; our problem should be to take a form of entertainment, and subject it to the process which would leave it a form of art. Perhaps the music-hall comedian is the best material. I am aware that this is a dangerous suggestion to make. For every person who is likely to consider it seriously there are a dozen toymakers who would leap to tickle aesthetic society into one more quiver and giggle of art debauch.⁶⁹

The music-hall was a medium, not an art form. But it had that constituent of convention which Eliot wanted in the drama. Crude though the music-hall was, it nevertheless had, in its reflection of the Englishman's moral feelings, that "vital flame, that impersonal, and, if you like, inhuman force" which not only obviated any need of the performer's personality but even allowed the audience to transcend their own personalities. The music-hall could accomplish this because it was dealing in myth. Its stage characters were archetypal. The personalities of these beings had been long established and were deeply rooted in the English sensibility. These beings were "partial" conventions, each one constituting a fragment "of a possible English myth":

The Englishman with a craving for the ideal (there are, we believe, a good many) famishes in the stalls of the modern theatre. The exotic spectacle, the sunshine of "Chu Chin Chow", is an opiate rather than a food. Man desires to see himself on the stage, more admirable, more forceful, more villainous, more comical, more despicable - and more much else - than he actually is. He has only the opportunity of seeing himself, sometimes a little better dressed. The romantic Englishman is in a bad way.

It is only perhaps in the music-hall, and sometimes in the cinema, that we have an opportunity for partial realization. Charlie Chaplin is not English, or American, but a universal figure, feeding the idealism of hungry millions in Czecho-Slovakia and Peru. But the English comedian supplies in part, and unconsciously, the defect: Little Tich, Robey, Nellie Wallace, Marie Lloyd, Mozart, Lupino Lane, George Graves, Robert Hale, and others, provide fragments of a possible English myth. They effect the Comic Purgation. The romantic Englishman, feeling in himself the possibility of being as funny as these people, is purged of unsatisfied desire, transcends himself, and unconsciously lives the myth, seeing life in the light

of imagination. What is sometimes called "vulgarity" is therefore one thing that has not been vulgarised.⁷⁰

The myth of the romantic Englishman achieved its effect because, being a myth, it transcended time and allowed the Englishman of old to interpenetrate the new.⁷¹ Such a characteristic limited the job of the music-hall comedian to precisely his business. To have intruded his own personality would have distorted the myth beyond recognition. The trans-temporal elements which made up the myth also made it too complex and precise to allow the kind of sophomoric tampering of Punch, for instance:

Sir Tunbelly Clumsy, Sir Giles Overreach, Squire Western, and Sir Sampson Legend . . . are different contributions by distinguished mythmakers to the chief myth which the Englishman has built about himself. The myth that a man makes has transformations according as he sees himself as hero or villain, as young or old, but it is essentially the same myth; Tom Jones is not the same person, but he is the same myth, as Squire Western; Midshipman Easy is part of the same myth; Falstaff is elevated above the myth to dwell on Olympus, more than a national character. Tennyson's broad-shouldered genial Englishman is a cousin of Tunbelly Clumsy; and Mr. Chesterton, when he drinks a glass of beer (if he does drink beer), and Mr. Squire, when he plays a game of cricket (if he does play cricket), contribute their little bit. This myth has seldom been opposed or emulated; Byron, a great mythmaker did, it is true, set up the Giaour, a myth for the whole of Europe. But in our time, barren of myths - when in France there is no successor to the honnête homme qui ne se pique de rien, and René, and the dandy, but only a deliberate school of mythopoeic nihilism - in our time the English myth is pitifully diminished. There is that degenerate descendent, the modern John Bull, the John Bull who usually alternates with Britannia in the cartoons of Punch, a John Bull composed of Podsnap and Bottomley. And John Bull becomes less and less a force, even in a purely political role.⁷²

Because this myth was so well defined and therefore allowed little tampering, it provided a solid substratum on which the performer could rely without having to be conscious of it. The myth of the romantic Englishman was, in other words, an underlying pattern like the kind of underlay Eliot admired in Marston's Sophonisba.⁷³ The unconscious

presence of the myth gave it its effectiveness as moral criticism:

Only unconsciously, however, is the Englishman willing to accept his own ideal. If he were aware that the fun of the comedian was more than fun he would be unable to accept it; just as, in all probability, if the comedian were aware that his fun was more than fun he might be unable to perform it. The audience do not realize that the performance of Little Tich is a compliment, and a criticism, of themselves. Neither could they appreciate the compliment, or swallow the criticism, implied by the unpleasant persons whom Jonson put upon the stage. The character of the serious stage, when he is not simply a dull ordinary person, is confected of abstract qualities, as loyalty, greed, and so on, to which we are supposed to respond with the proper abstract emotions. But the myth is not composed of abstract qualities; it is a point of view, transmuted to importance; it is made by the transformation of the actual by imaginative genius.⁷⁴

The one music-hall comedian who really captured Eliot's imagination was Marie Lloyd, a performer, who, to a very large extent, "represented and expressed that part of the English nation which has perhaps the greatest vitality and interest".⁷⁵ The work of Marie Lloyd embodied the myth of the Englishman for it represented the moral vitality of the lower classes, the one remaining reserve of the traditional English attitudes to life:

My own chief point is that I consider her superiority over other performers to be in a way a moral superiority: it was her understanding of the people and sympathy with them, and the people's recognition of the fact that she embodied the virtues which they genuinely most respected in private life, that raised her to the position she occupied at her death.⁷⁶

Lloyd, however, did not express her "moral superiority" through sermons. She did it very indirectly, indeed, unconsciously, by the expression of a conventional character like the charwoman:

To appreciate, for instance, the last turn in which Marie Lloyd appeared, one ought to know what objects a middle-aged woman of the charwoman class would carry in her bag; exactly how she would go through her bag in search of something; and exactly the tone of voice in which she would enumerate the objects she found in it. This was only part of the acting in Marie Lloyd's last song, 'One of the Ruins that Cromwell Knocked Abaht a Bit'.⁷⁷

The music-hall, however, not only presented the myth, it commanded an immediate response. The audience was ritualistically involved in an artistic representation of its own way of life:

The working man who went to the music-hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the act; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art.⁷⁸

This involvement of the audience in the re-enactment of its own myth, had the effect of re-enforcing its way of life, of re-affirming the things in which it believed:

It was, I think, this capacity for expressing the soul of the people that made Marie Lloyd unique, and that made her audiences, even when they joined in the chorus, not so much hilarious as happy.⁷⁹

It was precisely the lack of this audience involvement and moral re-affirmation which so bothered Eliot about the film industry. The film, like modern stage production, was in most cases trying for realism, and emphasizing the individual personality at the expense of the more universally human emotions:

There are, of course, all sorts of beautiful effects that the film can get and that are impossible to the stage: such as the negroes paddling their war canoes in 'Sanders of the River'. But I am concerned with something more fundamental. The cinema gives an illusion not of the stage but of life itself. When we see a great music-hall comedian on the stage, such as George Robey or Ernie Lotinga, we feel that he is conscious of his audience, that a great deal of the effect depends upon a sympathy set up between actor and audience, and we like to feel that some of his gags are spontaneous and were not thought of the night before. But when we see Laurel and Hardy, it is not Laurel and Hardy acting for us, it is Laurel and Hardy in another mess. The film is the vehicle of illusion, and it makes all the illusion of the stage seem crude. Then, again, while it is likely that voice reproduction will be further improved by science, I think that the spoken word will always be secondary in the film: in the best films today the voice is used sparingly, and interspersed with significant noises and even music. And, finally, there is no illusion of scenery on the stage that the worst-equipped film studio cannot improve upon.⁸⁰

Eliot was very concerned about the effects of this "illusion of life",

because, with illusion, the mind of the morally alive member of the music-hall audience "is lulled by continuous senseless music and continuous action too rapid for the brain to act upon, and will receive, without giving, in that same listless apathy with which the middle and upper classes regard any entertainment of the nature of art".⁸¹ As a result, with "the decay of the music-hall, with the encroachment of the cheap and rapid-breeding cinema, the lower classes will tend to drop into the same state of protoplasm as the bourgeoisie".⁸²

The music-hall was in actuality dying and with it the conventions of the myth of the Englishman and also the participation of the audience in that myth. One of the last vestiges of ancient British cultural tradition was on the way out. The middle class was taking over power in England and absorbing all values to its own standards of mediocrity and apathy. It no longer had the aristocracy to look up to, nor did it have any vital symbols like Marie Lloyd:

The middle classes have no such idol: the middle classes are morally corrupt. That is to say, their own life fails to find a Marie Lloyd to express it; nor have they any independent virtues which might give them as a conscious class any dignity. The middle classes, in England as elsewhere, under democracy, are morally dependent upon the aristocracy, and the aristocracy are subordinate to the middle class, which is gradually absorbing and destroying them.⁸³

And, while the middle class was standardizing values, the technology which had given it political mastery was standardizing practical habits of English life as well as the various forms of entertainment. Such standardization had the deceptive appearance of being a unifying force, but a Ford car in every driveway is a poor substitute for a universal feeling of brotherhood:

. . . what was called the conquest of space was expected, by increasing facilities of communication between peoples, to favour understanding. The conquest of space has made it possible for peoples to fight from greater distances, but in other ways has not done all that it should: in America, thanks to the conquest of space, you can get fresh vegetables and fruit at any time of the year, and none of it has any flavour. Standardization was expected to unify peoples, though perhaps at the price of monotony; standardization has tended to make peoples alike where they had better be different, and you can hear the same kind of music from any wireless station in Europe; but to exist in amity peoples need something more in common than a dance-step, or a universal mastery of Ford cars.⁸⁴

Standardization meant cultural death as far as Eliot was concerned. Not only would the member of the music-hall audience lose his chance to participate in his entertainment, he would "also have lost some of his interest in life".⁸⁵ Herein lay a strange paradox. The "illusion of life" which the cinema used to create its dreams of escape, dreams like those of Gauguin's romantic escape to a tropical island, was destroying actual life; just as "civilization", when it reached what were in real life exotic places, was destroying those places. The tropical island or its equivalent began to flourish in fantasy when it began to die in reality:

On the leader page of The Times newspaper for August 14th [1935] is a very interesting account of what is called a 'lost' tribe, but might as well be called a 'found' tribe, of Papuans of unknown Asiatic race, dwelling in a fertile valley protected, or hitherto protected, by high mountain ranges. This singular people, like any other hitherto discovered, failed to make any demonstrations of joy at the advent of Australian explorers, who unexpectedly found themselves in a situation more usual in Europe or North America, namely, 'starving in the midst of plenty'. 'By gesture the natives ordered the patrol to be gone', says the Australian correspondent; and the leader of the 'patrol' himself remarks: 'the treatment meted out by these people was the worst I have experienced, for they did not act through fear or food shortage.' Yet they were mostly friendly, which shows an intuitive grasp of a principle not overtly recognized in Europe: that the better two peoples become acquainted, the more cordially they dislike each other, and the best way to preserve friendliness is to keep one's distance. These Tari Furora, as they

call themselves, have other characteristics which distinguish them from Europeans and North Americans: for they have a remarkable interest in afforestation, and they live not in towns or villages, but in 'park-like farms', each family having its separate habitation. Again, 'every acre appeared to be under cultivation', which indicates the absence of grouse moors and deer forests. . . I am not horrified so much by the prospect of the future for the natives, black as that may be, as by the prospect of the future for us. For if we are so helpless in the hands of our 'civilization' that we admit our inability to prevent it from ruining Papuans, what hope have we of saving ourselves?⁸⁶

Examples of this sort of cultural death at home and abroad continually presented themselves to Eliot. He even used the tropical island as a major death theme in his one play which employed music-hall sensibility, Sweeney Agonistes. In his essay on Marie Lloyd he left no doubt that the death of music-hall culture (as well as the death of exotic cultures) was closely associated with the boredom brought on by the standardization of mass-production:

In an interesting essay in the volume of Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia, the psychologist W.H.R. Rivers adduced evidence which has led him to believe that the natives of that unfortunate archipelago are dying out principally for the reason that the 'Civilization' forced upon them has deprived them of all interest in life. They are dying from pure boredom. When every theatre has been replaced by 100 cinemas, when every musical instrument has been replaced by 100 gramophones, when every horse has been replaced by 100 cheap motor-cars, when electrical ingenuity has made it possible for every child to hear its bedtime stories from a loudspeaker, when applied science has done every thing possible with the materials on this earth to make life as interesting as possible, it will not be surprising if the population of the entire civilized world rapidly follows the fate of the Melanesians.⁸⁷

The attempt to provide an "illusion of life" also infected literature, according to Eliot. It reinforced the escapist mentality and the very dangerous habit of day-dreaming:

For the great majority of novels do only as the great majority of films: their purpose is to provide day-dreams. We know well enough what day-dreaming means, and what it can lead to, in individual psychology. But it is now a disease of society.⁸⁸

Thus, it is not hard to understand why Eliot himself insisted on technical and moral integrity as ultimate aesthetic standards. In condemning cinematic and literary "fiction" Eliot also pointed to a possible way out:

Fiction, not religion (according to Marx's silliest epigram), is the opium of the people to-day, and some other form of opium will be provided tomorrow, for some sort of opium they must have, until you can give them either religion, or to each man a job in which he can be passionately interested, or both. For the present, no doubt, commercial literature will continue to flourish and to pander, more and more severed from real literature.⁸⁹

A job of passionate interest, or religion, or both! These were Eliot's alternatives to the boredom of mechanized civilization. In effect, the life of civilized or city man depended not simply on a healthy economy, but on a healthy morality of which economics was only a subordinate part. These thoughts Eliot applied in particular to the British "Workingman" for whom and in whom the music-hall existed:

Is the British working man, in other words, very much better off than the French or German or Italian working man; and if so, are the ways in which he is better off ways in which it is good to be better off? We only ask these questions; suggesting that they are not so simple as they may appear; for the true 'standard of living', at all events, raises moral and spiritual, as well as economic questions; and suggests also the more humble answer that the British standard of living would be higher if the British working woman knew a little more about cooking, and the British working man and woman a little more about eating; and if simple natural pleasures, such as fresh air and country walks in fine weather, could be more usual, even if cinemas and wireless sets were more costly. As for the 'standard of living' of the more affluent class, it seems at present to involve long week-ends, and golf, tennis, and motoring on Sunday. The Roman empire left behind it at least a few ruined temples, aqueducts, and walls; one is sometimes inclined to wonder whether the British will leave, for the future archeologist, anything better than the traces of innumerable golf courses, and a number of corroded fowling-pieces, scattered like primitive arrow-heads, over the desolate wastes of Scottish moors.⁹⁰

A possible salvation for the British worker lay in a way of life more comprehensive than the limitations of his wages would allow. For

the dramatist, salvation lay in expressing the English myth to suggest where such adequacy was to be found. The next chapter will show Eliot—not unlike a music-hall comedian, searching for that very comprehensiveness or moral integrity. The final two chapters will discuss the plays as, to some extent, the fruits of his search. The myth which Eliot was attempting to create, or rather to keep alive, is not an easy thing to define, principally because of the status of myth at the time he set to work:

The modern dramatist, and probably the modern audience, is terrified of the myth. The myth is imagination and it is also criticism, and the two are one. The Seventeenth Century had its own machinery of virtues and vices, as we have, but its drama is a criticism of humanity far more serious than its conscious moral judgments. "Volpone" does not merely show that wickedness is punished; it criticises humanity by intensifying wickedness. How we are reassured about ourselves when we make the acquaintance of such a person on the stage! I do not for a moment suggest that anyone is affected by "Volpone" or any of the colossal Seventeenth Century figures as the newspapers say little boys are by cinema desperados. The myth is degraded by the child who points a loaded revolver at another, or ties his sister to a post, or rifles a sweet-shop; the Seventeenth Century populace was not appreciably modified by its theatre; and a great theatre in our own time would not transform the retired colonel from Maida Vale into a Miles Gloriosus. The myth is based upon reality, but does not alter it. The material was never very fine, or the Seventeenth Century men essentially superior to ourselves, more intelligent or more passionate. They were surrounded, indeed, by fewer prohibitions, freer than the millhand, or the petrified product which the public school pours into our illimitable suburbs.⁹¹

In conclusion, Eliot was after some mythic expression of his own understanding of what might have meaning in the experience of his potential audience.⁹² The experience of the audience was that of people living under the influence of the modern metropolis. It included the healthy morality of the music-hall patrons and the boredom of cinema culture. It was a twentieth-century manifestation of attitudes towards life which transcended time. This transcendence meant, to Eliot at least, that the equivalent attitudes towards life in Elizabethan and

Jacobean drama had meaning and value in the terms of the twentieth century. The two centuries, the seventeenth and the twentieth, were contemporaneous. The basic principle in which their meaning and value lay - the essential interdependence of language, emotion, and morality - was as important a factor in the experience of audiences of the one century as of the other. In short, Eliot's myth - his understanding of his audience's experience - was the city, and the city was for him language, emotion and morality.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MORAL DILEMMA

Eliot's principle that the "tension within the society may become also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual" applied quite directly to Eliot's own social role.¹ The larger social tension of a struggle between the moral health of the individual and the degeneration of society through mass culture became, in Eliot's work, a tension between his preference for the music-hall tradition and his rejection of cinema entertainment. In opting for the music-hall tradition Eliot was setting up his own defense of the moral health or integrity of the individual. This chapter will attempt to outline how Eliot thought of his work as just such a defense.

The defense of the integrity of the individual meant to Eliot a defense of language and, ultimately, of religion. His defense of language was closely involved with the music-hall tradition because that tradition was the descendent of the Elizabethan culture. Eliot had, in his study of that culture, or of its poetic drama at least, observed the close relationship between language, emotion, and morality. Eliot could, under the inspiration of the music-hall, apply this same connection to the defense of the integrity of the individual. A healthy language allowed precise registering of perceptions. Accurate perceptions in turn created healthy emotional responses which could counter the various abuses of emotions generated by a selfish and materialistic society. In short, a healthy language went a long way towards freeing the individual to be himself. The theatre allowed Eliot to exert a healthy influence on language, emotion and morality simultaneously. In

his plays he could work in particular with emotions as he could not in the various critical and polemical works that relate to the present discussion. This discussion will therefore concern itself only with the poet's role in society and the individual's relationship to God as Eliot saw them and used them in the defense of moral integrity, and as he tried to defend them against the critical attacks of I.A. Richards, Ezra Pound, and Wyndham Lewis. It will be seen in passing that Eliot was in a dilemma as to how to convince these critics once and for all of the validity of his position.

Eliot had a very concrete idea of what he thought the poet's, and by inference, his own role should be. If the music-hall culture was valid then the poet should aspire to the "condition of the music-hall comedian":

It is one thing to write in a style which is already popular, and another to hope that one's writing may eventually become popular. From one point of view, the poet aspires to the condition of the music-hall comedian. Being incapable of altering his wares to suit a prevailing taste, if there be any, he naturally desires a state of society in which they may become popular, and in which his own talents will be put to the best use. He is accordingly vitally interested in the use of poetry.²

The poet used his talents to suit tastes; in other words, he entertained.

Because he entertained, the theatre was the best medium in which to work:

Every poet would like, I fancy, to be able to think that he had some direct social utility. By this, as I hope I have already made clear, I do not mean that he should meddle with the tasks of the theologian, the preacher, the economist, the sociologist or anybody else, that he should do anything but write poetry, poetry not defined in terms of something else. He would like to be something of a popular entertainer, and be able to think his own thoughts behind a tragic or a comic mask. He would like to convey the pleasures of poetry, not only to a larger audience, but to larger groups of people collectively; and the theatre

is the best place in which to do it. There might, one fancies, be some fulfillment in exciting this communal pleasure, to give an immediate compensation for the pains of turning blood into ink. As things are, and as fundamentally they must always be, poetry is not a career, but a mug's game. No honest poet can ever feel quite sure of the permanent value of what he has written: he may have wasted his time and messed up his life for nothing. All the better, then, if he could at least have the satisfaction of having a part to play in society as worthy as that of the music-hall comedian.³

The theatre was ideal for the poet because of the wide range of people whose language, emotions, and morals he could affect. In it he confronted various standards or "stratifications" of taste which he could transform simultaneously and on several levels at once:

. . . I believe that the poet naturally prefers to write for as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible, and that it is the half-educated and ill-educated rather than the uneducated, who stand in his way: I myself should like an audience which could neither read nor write. The most useful poetry, socially, would be one which could cut across all the present stratifications of public taste - stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration. The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social 'usefulness' for poetry, is the theatre. In a play of Shakespeare you get several levels of significance. For the simplest auditors there is the plot, for the more thoughtful the character and conflict of character, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for the more musically sensitive the rhythm, and for auditors of greater sensitiveness and understanding a meaning which reveals itself gradually. And I do not believe that the classification of audience is so clear-cut as this; but rather that the sensitiveness of every auditor is acted upon by all these elements at once, though in different degrees of consciousness. At none of these levels is the auditor bothered by the presence of that which he does not understand, or by the presence of that in which he is not interested.⁴

Having said this, Eliot then discussed himself as a kind of music-hall comedian poet. He deliberately attempted, as he said, to cut across "stratifications of public taste" in his first verse play, Sweeney Agonistes, a play written in the spirit of the music-hall. Poetry was a very useful thing to Eliot from the beginning of his career as a poetic dramatist.

It must of course be kept in mind that in discussing poetry as socially useful, or in discussing Eliot as a moralist that the poetry comes first. The health-giving effects are simply very important by-products which could probably not be achieved in any other way, except perhaps by the intervention of religion. The by-products of vital emotions and morality come from poetry, again, because of their intimate connection with language:

We may say that the duty of the poet, as poet, is only indirectly to his people: his direct duty is to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve. In expressing what other people feel he is also changing the feeling by making it more conscious; he is making people more aware of what they feel already, and therefore teaching them something about themselves. But he is not merely a more conscious person than the others; he is also individually different from other people, and from other poets too, and can make his readers share consciously in new feelings which they had not experienced before.⁵

In order that the poet be able to advance to limits of consciousness by preserving what is valuable in language and by extending and improving what he finds undeveloped in the language he needs the assistance of other languages and their fields of awareness. In Eliot's own case the instance of cross-fertilization is quite clear. Laforgue and Baudelaire provided him with experiments in French which had not been made in English and which Eliot felt he could make.⁶ Cross-fertilization was also a virtue which Eliot looked for in other poets. It is interesting that he choose on one occasion to commend a Jewish poet for this precise reason:

It is not a matter of indifference that poetry written by an Irishman, a Welshman, a Scot, an American or a Jew should be undistinguishable from that written by an Englishman: it is undesirable. The poetry of Isaac Rosenberg, for instance, does not only owe its distinction to its being Hebraic but because it is Hebraic it is a contribution to English literature. For a Jewish poet to be able to write like a Jew, in western Europe and in a western European language, is al-

most a miracle; and for different reasons and in different degrees it is also difficult for the other people I have mentioned. It is not a petty question of employing one's native Doric, which is merely a nuisance, except for an occasional word or phrase which may enrich the English language; it is not a question of being sentimental about the old homestead and the landscapes of childhood. What is essentially Scottish about Dunbar is not his vocabulary; and what is essentially American about Walt Whitman is not his admiration for New York or for the vast size of his country. What is essential is impossible fully to define, but it is most effectually expressed through rhythm. It is something which can best be expressed, and most successfully maintained, through poetry. And poetry of this kind may have a fertilizing effect upon English: and fertilization, either from its own relations or from foreign languages, is what it perpetually needs.⁷

Even more basic to the poet's task of revitalization of language than cross-fertilization, was the great need for respect and understanding of the word, and especially the power and meaning of the word. F.H. Bradley, though not exactly a poet, was a writer whom Eliot thought possessed of such respect:

In an unbalanced or uncultured philosophy words have a way of changing their meaning - as sometimes with Hegel; or else they are made, in a most ruthless and piratical manner, to walk the plank: such as the words which Professor J.B. Watson drops overboard, and which we know to have meaning and value. But Bradley, like Aristotle, is distinguished by his scrupulous respect for words, that their meaning should be neither vague nor exaggerated; and the tendency of his labours is to bring British philosophy closer to the Greek tradition.⁸

Bradley, of course, was of special interest to Eliot, as Eliot's doctoral dissertation on that philosopher attests. So strong was Bradley's influence that it virtually determined Eliot's own prose style.⁹

Eliot also, as is known, greatly admired the work of Ezra Pound. It was very possibly from Pound, an outspoken critic of society, that Eliot learned the social significance of language. Pound's respect for the power of the word equalled Bradley's respect for its meaning:

. . . the spoken idiom is not only a prime factor, but certainly one of the most potent, progressively so as any modality of civilization ages. Printed word or drum telegraph are neither without bearing on the aggregate life of the folk. As language becomes the most powerful instrument of perfidy, so language alone can riddle and cut through the meshes. Used to conceal meaning, used to blur meaning, to produce the complete and utter inferno of the past century . . . discussion of which would lead me out of the bounds of this volume . . . against which, SOLELY a care for language, for accurate registration by language avails.¹⁰

A poet needed not only the influence of other languages and respect for the meaning and power of his own in order to revitalize language, he also needed to know who the enemies of revitalization were. One very formidable enemy was the liberal thinking of science which tended to rob language of its meaning. The language technique of a writer like Lancelot Andrewes was one possible weapon to use on such an enemy:

To persons whose minds are habituated to feed on the vague jargon of our time, when we have a vocabulary for everything and exact ideas about nothing - when a word half understood, torn from its place in some alien or half-formed science, as of psychology, conceals from both writer and reader the meaninglessness of a statement, when all dogma is in doubt except the dogmas of sciences of which we have read in the newspapers, when the language of theology itself, under the influence of an undisciplined mysticism of popular philosophy, tends to become a language of tergiversation - Andrewes may seem pedantic and verbal. It is only when we have saturated ourselves in his prose, followed the movement of his thought, that we find his examination of words terminating in the ecstasy of assent. Andrewes takes a word and derives the world from it; squeezing and squeezing the word until it yields a full juice of meaning which we should never have supposed any word to possess. In this process the qualities which we have mentioned, of ordonnance and precision, are exercised.¹¹

Andrewes' process, as Eliot referred to it here, was the achieving of "relevant intensity", the qualities of ordonnance and precision were qualities of "arrangement and structure", and "precision in the use of words" respectively.¹² Together, intensity, ordonnance, and precision were a strong defense for meaning.

Another enemy of language, one which particularly abused the

power of language, and against which there was possibly no defense, was the standardization of language through the media. In the presence of such an enemy the poet could, for the moment at least, only go about his business in the normal fashion:

It would not be to my present purpose to inveigh against the ubiquity of standardized, or 'B.B.C.' English. If we all came to talk alike there would no longer be any point in our not writing alike: but until that time comes - and I hope it may be long postponed - it is the poet's business to use the speech he finds about him, that with which he is most familiar.¹³

The possible death of language through standardization was a concept with many ramifications for Eliot. Such death not only implied the degeneration of culture noted in the previous chapter, it also threatened the very existence of feeling itself, and at the same time meant the possible end of varieties of culture on the international level. As well, the death of language was one with the death of God:

If, finally, I am right in believing that poetry has a 'social function' for the whole of the people of the poet's language, whether they are aware of his existence or not, it follows that it matters to each people of Europe that the others should continue to have poetry. I cannot read Norwegian poetry, but if I were told that no more poetry was being written in the Norwegian language I should feel an alarm which would be much more than generous sympathy. I should regard it as a spot of malady which was likely to spread over the whole Continent; the beginning of a decline which would mean that people everywhere would cease to be able to express, and consequently be able to feel, the emotions of civilized beings. This of course might happen. Much has been said everywhere about the decline of religious belief; not so much notice has been taken of the decline of religious sensibility. The trouble of the modern age is not merely the inability to believe certain things about God and man which our forefathers believed, but the inability to feel towards God and man as they did. A belief in which you no longer believe is something which to some extent you can still understand; but when religious feeling disappears, the words in which men have struggled to express it become meaningless. It is true that religious feeling varies naturally from country to country, and from age to age, just as poetic feeling does; the feeling varies, even when the belief, the doctrine, remains the same. But this is a condition of human life, and what I am apprehensive of is death. It is equally possible that the feeling for poetry, and the feelings which are the material of poetry, may disappear everywhere: which might perhaps help to facilitate that unification of the

world which some people consider desirable for its own sake.¹⁴

Eliot's concern for the death of language matches his concern for the disappearance of music-hall culture. If language died, so would the poet as music-hall comedian. It was therefore necessary for the poet to be on his moral guard against the forces of decay, not only in language, but wheresoever they appeared.

The poet exercised his citizenship in the modern metropolis under the guise of the music-hall comedian. As long as he created his own poetry his individuality was intact. But like all citizens of such a "religious-political complex" he had other duties, as well as many needs.¹⁵ If these duties and needs did not retain sensible proportions his individuality would be threatened. It was therefore necessary for the poet to take a moral stand, which, as in the case of Eliot, was a political and religious stand as well. It has not been properly realised that Eliot's various moral pronouncements were not legislation for the arts so much as they were simply self-defense on his own part, and expressed in such a way as to be useful to any one else who felt himself in a similar situation. These pronouncements are many and varied. Usually they come back to some discussion of the one and the many. Usually as well, rather than defining the poet's stand for anything, these pronouncements simply take whatever occasion is at hand to mention what the poet cannot put up with and remain a poet, a citizen, a music-hall comedian, a simple individual human person. For the moment it will be of value to present only a small cross section of such pronouncements by picking up the discussion from the argument for world unity and proceeding to what is involved in unity of the

individual. Further statements of a similar kind will be used to elucidate the plays in the following chapters, where such statements apply.

What strikes one immediately about Eliot's social thinking is his refusal to think in either utopian or liberalist terms, the two of course being closely connected. Eliot did not believe with the liberals that man was self-perfectible, and consequently he could not accept any idealist form of government. It is, as a result, not surprising that he was highly sceptical of any views of world unification, whether of democratic world government, or of fascist or communist dictatorship:

There is a fallacy in democracy, for instance, in assuming that a majority of natural and unregenerate men is likely to want the right things; there may also be a fallacy in dictatorship in so far as it represents a willingness of a majority to surrender responsibility. In nations so self-contained as to be able to ignore each other, culture and perhaps even blood would become too inbred; but if the races of the world mixed until racial strains and local cultures disappeared, the result might be still more disastrous.¹⁶

When Eliot spoke here of "natural and unregenerate man" he had in mind that same "frightful discovery of morality" which motivated his interest in The Changeling, in Hulme's theories about Original Sin, in Baudelaire's reverse Christianity, and in the very nature of dramatic conflict itself.¹⁷ Perhaps it might be better to say that Eliot was not simply sceptical but very suspicious of any political ideas that fallen man might propagandize. Igor Stravinsky reported himself to have once born witness to that very suspicion:

As we drove away from the club Eliot confessed to a fondness for East Fifty-second Street - "being a dead end makes it so convenient" - and as we caught a view of the United Nations Building he said he had

lately come to suspect that "an anti-European conspiracy" was afoot there.¹⁸

If the disappearance of individual cultures was to be feared because of these suspect forms of world government, even more was the disappearance of the culture of the individual person so to be feared. A re-structuring of the external social order could do no more to help the disturbed individual than could the individual to help himself, and that was precious little:

The miseries that people suffer through their particular abnormalities of temperament are visible on the surface: the deeper design is that of the human misery and bondage which is universal. In normal lives this misery is mostly concealed; often, what is most wretched of all, concealed from the sufferer more effectively than from the observer. The sick man does not know what is wrong with him; he partly wants to know, and mostly wants to conceal the knowledge from himself. In the Puritan morality that I remember, it was tacitly assumed that if one was thrifty, enterprising, intelligent, practical and prudent in not violating social conventions, one ought to have a happy and 'successful' life. Failure was due to some weakness or perversity peculiar to the individual; but the decent man need have no nightmares. It is now rather more common to assume that all individual misery is the fault of 'society', and is remediable by alterations from without. Fundamentally, the two philosophies, however different they may appear in operation, are the same. It seems to me that all of us, so far as we attach ourselves to created objects and surrender our wills to temporal ends, are eaten by the same worm.¹⁹

The miseries of the world, of international order, say, or of starvation, or of political or financial inequality on all social and governmental levels, were one with the miseries of the individual in their ultimate irremediability on the natural level. Those miseries really reflected "the deeper design" of "the human misery and bondage which is universal". There was simply no answer but to consider man on the level of that deeper design. Important though it was to orient society to the individual, it was, perhaps, in view of that very importance, absolutely necessary to orient the individual towards God:

The conception of individual liberty, for instance, must be based upon the unique importance of every single soul, the knowledge that every man is ultimately responsible for his own salvation or damnation, and the consequent obligation of society to allow every individual the opportunity to develop his full humanity. But unless this humanity is considered always in relation to God, we may expect to find an excessive love of created beings, in other words humanitarianism, leading to a genuine oppression of human beings in what is conceived by other human beings to be their interest.²⁰

The need to consider man in relation to God was a need which made the philosophy of Bradley very attractive to Eliot. Here was a germ of the answer to the problem of the integrity of the individual and his threatened reduction to the level of a cipher in the mass. Bradley was far from having the whole answer, but he pointed in a direction of much value. Eliot quoted Bradley in order to spell out the nature of the relationship of man to God:

'How can the human-divine ideal ever be my will? The answer is, Your will it never can be as the will of your private self, so that your private self should become wholly good. To that self you must die, and by faith be made one with that ideal. You must resolve to give up your will, as the mere will of this or that man, and you must put your whole self, your entire will, into the will of the divine. That must be your one self, as it is your true self; that you must hold to both with thought and will, and all other you must renounce.'

There is one direction in which these words - and, indeed, Bradley's philosophy as a whole - might be pushed, which would be dangerous; the direction of diminishing the value and dignity of the individual, of sacrificing him to a Church or a State. But, in any event, the words cannot be interpreted in the sense of Arnold. The distinction is not between a 'private self' and a 'public self' or a 'higher self', it is between the individual as himself and no more, a mere numbered atom, and the individual in communion with God. The distinction is clearly drawn between man's 'mere will' and 'the will of the Divine'.²¹

It was not hard for Eliot to see the danger inherent in propositions about the relationship of God to man, and it may well have been a difficulty which never resolved itself for him. At least, however, it was an answer which, rather than negating thought and will, the two functions in which the dignity of the individual lay, called for con-

tinuous and full use of both:

To surrender individual judgement to a Church is a hard thing; to surrender individual responsibility to a party is, for many men, a pleasant stimulant and sedative: and those who have once experienced this sweet intoxication are not easily brought back to the difficult path of thinking for themselves, and of respecting their own person and that of others.²²

Eliot's hesitations about the surrender of will to a Church seem never to have been completely overcome, or so the constant struggle to achieve religious commitment in the plays would indicate. It could well be that certain of his critics, namely I.A. Richards, Ezra Pound, and Wyndham Lewis, sensed Eliot's doubts - in the case of Richards, even before Eliot had actually entered the Church of England. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that none of the three could accept a connection between language and emotion on the one hand, and morality on the other. Richards attacked the connection directly on the theoretical level. Pound, in a more practical vein, attacked Eliot's right to make such a connection since the Church herself was guilty of moral turpitude in the field of economics. To defend individual integrity through a defense of language, emotion and morality, without a defense of economic integrity was simply a waste of time. Lewis suggested that any involvement in morality would destroy poetry or any art.

To take the arguments in a more or less chronological order, the first criticism to consider is I.A. Richards' theory of the separation of poetry and belief in Eliot's The Waste Land. This well-known and protracted discussion began in 1925 in an article by Richards printed in The Criterion.²³ The argument was so gentlemanly and uncomplicated

that it had the appearance of being staged in order to provoke comments from others. Eliot's first reply, which contains the theory of Richards in question, came in 1927. It must, naturally, be noted that Richards was not really attacking Eliot, for Eliot had not yet made a public declaration of his beliefs. Eliot had nevertheless to treat the matter much as if it were an attack once he had decided to move openly into the problems of morality- a move which was probably preparing the way for his public statement of belief in November of 1923.²⁴ The wording Eliot used in his first response was hardly changed or elaborated in his later continuations of the debate in his essay on "Dante",²⁵ or on "The Modern Mind".²⁶ Eliot began his response as follows:

In an essay of very great interest published in The Criterion for July, 1925, Mr. I.A. Richards did me the honour of employing one of my poems as evidence on behalf of a theory he was there expounding. He observed, in a footnote, that the author in question, "by effecting a complete separation between his poetry and all beliefs, and this without any weakening of the poetry, has realised what might otherwise have remained largely a speculative possibility." This footnote is explicatory of the following sentence in the text:- "a sense of desolation, of uncertainty, of futility, of the baselessness of aspirations, of the vanity of endeavour, and a thirst for a life-giving water which seems suddenly to have failed, are signs in consciousness of this necessary reorganization of our lives."²⁷

As a counter to Richards' theory, Eliot asked the question: "Even where beliefs are not made explicit, how far can any poetry be detached from the beliefs of the poet?" The answer to this question was presented in three parts. First, Eliot indicated that Richards was in favour of a separation of intellect and sensibility, a separation which was in strong contrast to Eliot's theory of the unity of language, emotion, and morality:

I have gathered from Mr. Richards . . . that he looks forward to a possible development of the human mind in which sensibility and intellect will in some way be separated, in which "belief" will consist in the provisional assent given to tenable scientific hypotheses, and in which sensibility will no longer be hampered by the restrictions of what happens to be felt as true at any particular time. We were agreed, I believe, on one point: that in the history of literature feeling and emotion had been altered, and at certain times diminished, by whatever at the time it was inevitable to consider real or true.²⁸

Eliot went on to suggest that belief changed the manner in which it was held from age to age, and that, by implication, the modern style of doubt was continuous with previous forms of assent. As a consequence, Eliot could not agree that a "sense of desolation" meant a separation from belief:

As for the poem of my own in question, I cannot for the life of me see the "complete separation" from all belief - or it is something no more complete than the separation of Christina Rossetti from Dante.' A "sense of desolation," etc. (if it is there) is not a separation from belief; it is nothing so pleasant. In fact, doubt, uncertainty, futility, etc., would seem to me to prove anything except this agreeable partition; for doubt and uncertainty are merely a variety of belief.²⁹

The third part of Eliot's answer to the question of the separation of poetry and belief constituted in itself a theory on the nature of belief and of the probable increase of difficulty of belief in the times to come:

The majority of people live below the level of belief or doubt. It takes application, and a kind of genius, to believe anything, and to believe anything (I do not mean merely to believe in some "religion") will probably become more and more difficult as time goes on. But we are constantly being told how much more difficult in other ways - telephones, wireless, aeroplanes, and future inventions to try our nerves - life is becoming; and the complication of belief is merely another complication to be put up with. We await, in fact (as Mr. Richards is awaiting the future poet), the great genius who shall triumphantly succeed in believing something. For those of us who are higher than the mob, and lower than the man of inspiration, there is always doubt; and in doubt we are living parasitically (which is better than not living at all) on the minds of men of genius of the past who have believed something.³⁰

The reason, perhaps, that Eliot could not accept a separation of poetry and belief was that poetry was not science, it was not a medium for proving the truth of anything. Poetry created, and in that creation, if the creator was genius enough, might lie something that lesser minds could believe:

Poetry cannot prove that anything is true; it can only create a variety of wholes composed of intellectual and emotional constituents, justifying the emotion by the thought and the thought by the emotion: it proves successively, or fails to prove, that certain worlds of thought and feeling are possible. It provides intellectual sanction for feeling, and esthetic sanction for thought.³¹

Eliot's answer to Richards in a way answered his own doubts about the dangers of attaching himself to an organized body of beliefs. Although beliefs may remain constant, the sensibility through which they are expressed and in which they are accepted must change. The poet registers the change and so makes the beliefs real for the new sensibility. Ultimately, rather than being limited, his art is challenged and prodded on to new accomplishments, and rather than drying up in doubt, that art is given a world without end to explore. That Eliot could use Richards with such facility to his own ends was very possibly a result of the fact that Richards was not a poet or artist of any kind. More difficult to deal with were the powerful insights and insistent persuasiveness of Pound. If Richards' theories were not an attack, there can be little doubt that Pound's accusations were.

The superficial reason for Pound's feeling of rancour towards Eliot was Eliot's refusal to consider the economic plight of the masses with anything more than passing sympathy. On a deeper level Pound seems to have taken exception to Eliot's assertion of the primacy of

morality over economics with its inherent principle that any other order of primacy would rob man of his dignity. In a 1933 issue of The Criterion Eliot concluded some remarks on various social, political, and economic theories with the following remarks. It was probably these remarks which began the debate between the two poets:

I hold that it is ultimately the moralists and philosophers who must supply the foundations of statesmanship, even though they never appear in the forum. We are constantly being told that the economic problem cannot wait. It is equally true that the moral and spiritual problems cannot wait: they have already waited far too long.³²

In response to Eliot, Pound wrote a letter to The Criterion in which he said:

The issue, in the Eleventh Year of the Fascist Revolution, is that 'the good life' as conceived and agreed on by people as low in the ethical scale as the British economists in general, as diverse and as low in the intellectual scale as the delegates to the Economic Conference, and 97 per cent of all European ministers, leaders of parties (socialists, conservatives, etc., with all shades of filth intervening) is - i.e., the 'good life' is - impossible until certain very simple facts are perceived: 1. that every factory and every industry creates in a given period a mass of prices greater than the amount of purchasing power it puts into circulation; 2. Let it go at that. The other items are probably derivative from this simple proposition, and the remedies presumably extend from C.H. Douglas to the demonstration in Woergl.

Salter as 'revolutionist' is a very personal concept of the honoured Editor. We supposed the evolution of Kreuger had eliminated Salter from serious consideration and we rejoice that Keynes is verging toward his proper field, literary dilettantism, with the hope that he will drift more and more into discussions of aesthetics, preferably as an essayist on pointillisme and late impressionist paysagistes.

Economics are about as complicated as a gasoline engine and ignorance of them is not excusable even in prime ministers and other irresponsible relics of [a?] disreputable era.³³

Eliot's reply in the editorial of the same issue indicated just how adamant his stand as a moralist was:

I hope that Major Douglas is right from top to bottom and copper-plated; but whether he is right or wrong does not matter a fig to my argument for the priority of ethics over politics. Indeed, if there

is an economic remedy at hand, then the considerations I have put forward seem to me all the more pertinent. I may be wholly in error. Possibly the difficulty is merely that Mr. Pound is interested in public affairs primarily as an artist - and with much greater solicitude, it should not be necessary to add, for other artists than for himself; and I am inclined to approach public affairs from the point of view of a moralist. As for morals, I will offer Mr. Pound, if he cares to use it for admonishing me, the admirable phrase addressed by the Director of Talks to the gallant gentleman who offered to take part in a broadcast discussion of Air-Bombing: "the subject is not at the moment exercising the public mind and it would be better to wait until some turn of circumstances gives it more topical value."³⁴

While Eliot and Pound shadow-boxed in The Criterion Eliot was busy taking the quarrel on to more serious ground in his Page-Barbour lectures at the University of Virginia in 1933. The lectures were subsequently published under the title After Strange Gods; a Primer of Modern Heresy. The main attack of the lectures was directed against the total neglect of the human will in the work of important modern writers. Naturally, Eliot's insistence on the priority of ethics over economics angered Pound, as was to be expected. What might not have been expected, and what Pound does not seem to have had a good answer for, was Eliot's attack on Pound's ethics. The debate, which resulted from Eliot's unusually strong out-pouring, was carried on primarily in the New English Weekly. The NEW was neutral territory and consequently gave Eliot no editorial advantage.

In After Strange Gods Eliot set out to stir up some kind of a commitment for or against good and evil as an essential element, a sine qua non, in literature. As his Preface made clear, he was not concerned with literary criticism: "I am uncertain of my ability to criticize my contemporaries as artists; I ascended the platform of these lectures only in the role of moralist".³⁵ To be a moralist meant to be

a person interested in a tradition which grew and enlivened itself according to a principle of orthodoxy or right belief, and which performed the environmental function of setting up an objective standard by which to criticize the accuracy or inaccuracy of an artist's portrayal of human nature. The moralist was interested, for instance, in the degree to which a novelist's characters are aware of each other, whether they recognize each other as agents to some degree responsible for their actions, or whether at least the novelist himself sees them in such a light. The moralist was also interested in the artist's awareness of the operation of evil in society; in whether the artist accepted or rejected the presence of such evil; and, if he accepted it, in whether the artist countered that evil with some form of substitute religious indulgence. Yeat's spiritualism, or Arnold's (and I.A. Richards') worship of poetry exemplified such a substitution.

In talking of the individual as an agent responsible for his actions, Eliot remarked that "with the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin, with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle, the human beings presented to us both in poetry and in prose fiction to-day, and more patently among the serious writers than in the underworld of letters, tend to become less and less real".³⁶

The reality of character Eliot was talking about, was a reality within the given artistic limits of the work of art. It was a reality which directly reflected the external world. As people were involved in a moral struggle in the real world, so should they be in the artist's world. It is impossible to say whether Eliot was contradicting himself in opting for this kind of realism. Certainly, he had condemned the

realism of the performer's or other artist's personality which tended to destroy the conventional limits of drama or other fields of art. This condemnation he made in connection with Elizabethan and modern drama as noted above.³⁷ He also condemned the interference of the artist's personality in "Tradition and the Individual Talent".³⁸ And he spoke against the same indulgence again on the last pages of After Strange Gods itself.³⁹ If there is no contradiction between the demand for realism of character and the denial of the realism of the performer, then it is at least necessary to distinguish the two kinds of realism, which Eliot does not seem to have done. For the moment it may help to define the realism which Eliot condoned as a moral realism and to observe that, since this moral realism tended to be an artistic convention which Eliot wished to promote, it therefore fell within the limitations of the artistic process, rather than breaking down those limitations as much modern realism tended, in Eliot's eyes, to do.

The importance of a distinction between realism and moral realism becomes immediately obvious when it is considered that it was precisely for a lack of this kind of realism that Eliot criticized Pound (not to mention D.H. Lawrence and others). It was this criticism which initiated in deadly earnest the quarrel between the two men:

It is in fact in moments of moral and spiritual struggle depending upon spiritual sanctions, rather than in those 'bewildering minutes' in which we are all very much alike, that men and women come nearest to being real. If you do away with this struggle, and maintain that by tolerance, benevolence, inoffensiveness and a redistribution or increase of purchasing power, combined with a devotion, on the part of an elite, to Art, the world will be as good as anyone could require, then you must expect human beings to become more and more vaporous. This is exactly what we find of the society which Mr. Pound puts in Hell, in his Draft

of XXX Cantos. It consists (I may have overlooked one or two species) of politicians, profiteers, financiers, newspaper proprietors and their hired men, agents provocateurs, Calvin, St. Clement of Alexandria, the English, vice-crusaders, liars, the stupid, pedants, preachers, those who do not believe in Social Credit, bishops, lady golfers, Fabians, conservatives and imperialists; and all 'those who have set money-lust before the pleasures of the senses'. It is, in its way, an admirable Hell, 'without dignity, without tragedy'. At first sight the variety of types - for these are types, and not individuals - may be a little confusing; but I think it becomes a little more intelligible if we see at work three principles, (1) the aesthetic, (2) the humanitarian, (3) the Protestant. And I find one considerable objection to a Hell of this sort: that a Hell altogether without dignity implies a Heaven without dignity also. If you do not distinguish between individual responsibility and circumstances in Hell, between essential Evil and social accidents, then the Heaven (if any) implied will be equally trivial and accidental. Mr. Pound's Hell, for all its horrors, is a perfectly comfortable one for the modern mind to contemplate, and disturbing to no one's complacency: it is a Hell for the other people, the people we read about in the newspapers, not for oneself and one's friends.⁴⁰

Pound's reaction to this criticism, a reaction which verged on the violent, came in his review of After Strange Gods in The New English Weekly.⁴¹ Pound's title for his review, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest", described, if not Eliot's After Strange Gods by itself, the quarrel which was about to ensue. Pound proceeded to turn Eliot's arguments upside down by suggesting that if there was moral fault to be corrected it was the Church's:

The fact is that "religion" long since resigned. Religion in the person of its greatest organized European institution resigned. The average man now thinks of religion either as a left-over or an irrelevance.⁴²

Religion had "resigned", apparently, from its moral duty to uphold economic justice:

In the "Ages of Faith", meaning the Ages of Christian faith, religion in the person of the Church concerned itself specifically with economic discrimination.

It concerned itself with a root dissociation of two ideas which the last filthy centuries have, to their damnation, lost.

In Dante's intellectual world certain financial activities are "against nature"; they are damned with sodomy. The Church was not abrogating her claim to judge between good and evil along one of the most vital and intimate lines.⁴³

Pound was asserting his right as an artist to observe the Church's abrogation of its right to condemn economic abuses. It was the Church, not Pound, that was satisfied to condemn "types" to hell, rather than to offend individuals: "I am asserting a known and established fact: when religion was real the church concerned itself with vital phenomena in ECONOMICS".⁴⁴ Furthermore, Pound felt that even Eliot himself was really censuring the Church, and not modern literature, though Eliot was possibly not aware that he was doing so: "The weakness he [Eliot] is gunning for is NOT a religious weakness in something else, but an ethical weakness in organized Christianity. The sacerdos has been superseded by the (often subsidized) ecclesiastical bureaucrat".⁴⁵

Pound went on to suggest that the origin of the Church's weakness was to be found closely tied up with a deterioration of language, and also, that perhaps Eliot's language suffered from a similar deterioration:

This decline was not unexpected and the Middle Ages are full of propaganda and warning against this particular danger.

The battle was won by greed. The language of religion became imprecise, just as the language of all forms of modern flim-flam, including popular and philological lectures, has become imprecise.⁴⁶

By introducing the problem of language, Pound brought the argument around to exactly what he thought a "mare's nest" was. In a book published about the same time Pound used the term, "mare's nest" with a display of his characteristic interest in the power of language:

Language is not a mere cabinet curio or museum exhibit. It does definitely function in all human life from the tribal state onward. You

cannot govern without it, you cannot make laws without it. That is you make laws, and they become mere mare's nests for graft and discussion. 'The meaning has to be determined', etc.⁴⁷

If a mare's nest was the corruption of language through law, then Eliot's insistence on moral realism would be for Pound very much a potential "mare's nest".

Eliot had, however, already defended the language of After Strange Gods somewhat obliquely, and outside of the main argument conducted in NEW. In a review of a lecture given by A.E. Housman and published under the title of The Name and Nature of Poetry Eliot explained Housman's technique, but in language reminiscent of the subtitle of his own Virginian lectures. A Primer of Modern Heresy:

We must keep in mind that this essay is a lecture; and the exigencies of a popular lecture require the author to select his points very carefully, to aim at form and proportion rather than connected profundity, and to avoid going too deeply into anything which is, for the purposes of the moment, another problem. We must not, in short, judge a lecture on Poetry as if it was a book on Æsthetics. The author may himself walk the straight line, but if he is to say anything at all in the time it is difficult for him, if not impossible, not to make assertions which, if pressed firmly and indefatigably by an unfriendly critic, will not yield a concentrated drop of heresy. I think that such a critic might be able to extract (1) the Essence of Poetry Theory, (2) the Pure Poetry Theory, (3) the Physiological Theory. None of these theories can be flatly denied without equal error; I do not believe that Mr. Housman maintains any of them to a vicious degree; I mention them in the hope of sparing other critics the trouble of denouncing Mr. Housman for what he does not maintain.⁴⁸

Eliot published a full review of the same book in the next issue of The Criterion, this time by Pound. Pound remarked that "Mr. Housman's prose proceeds with a suavity which the present writer is perfectly willing to envy. Only a biased judgement would deny this, and only a man writing in irritation would, it seems to me, be unaware".⁴⁹ So for the most part stood the matter of the verbal side of Eliot's "mare's nest". The matter

of its content, if such a distinction is really valid in the present case, was not so easily settled.

Eliot agreed, in his reply to Pound's review of After Strange Gods, with most of what Pound had said, including Pound's criticism of the inadequacy of the lecture form to the matter in hand.⁵⁰ However, Eliot insisted (no doubt to the chagrin of the word-conscious Pound) on quite a little clarification of terms. Eliot could not accept Pound's mention of types such as the "ecclesiastical bureaucrat" or the "average man", nor could Eliot find meaning in a statement like "when religion was real". Pound subsequently defended his use of types and, in particular, of the "average man" type, by saying:

. . . I did, in the pages of Mr. Eliot's own august organ, say a few words on society at large, and on the unlikelihood of genius getting a decent break UNTIL the whole economic order were so changed that EVERY MAN would get a break quite good enough for the first-rate artist or writer. (Vide "Murder by Capital", "Criterion", July 1933.) Even if I hadn't specifically written "L'Homme Moyen Sensuel" more years ago than some men would care to remember, my mention of the "average man" was not intended as a surprise, even to Mr. Eliot. His being surprised is, however, useful, as it sheds light on a peculiar malady of his logic. I mean that the kind of fallacy he commits in his Primer, he commits in his letter.

I do not in my literary criticism show deference to the average man.

He (Eliot) is therefore surprised that I "cite him" "as an authority" in this context, apart from the fact that I do not cite the average man as an authority, but mention him and his condition as showing an effect, i.e., one of the effects of the deliquescence of religion in our time.⁵¹

Pound then went on to put his finger on the specific points of Eliot's doctrine which were apparently wrong. Pound implied first that Eliot had used faulty logic, and then boldly condemned Eliot's failure to state a specific religious position that would ameliorate the evils of the time:

He [Eliot] is in fact treating the sickness of the age. His diagnosis is wrong. His remedy is an irrelevance.

I have for twenty-five years tried to avoid proofs resting on the unknowable. I have tried to avoid, in all kinds of discussion, the type of fallacy corresponding to the mathematical fallacy or trick equation of using zero or infinity as the middle link in a proof.

Mr. Eliot's book is pernicious in that it distracts the reader from a vital problem (economic justice); it implies that we need more religion, but does not specify the nature of that religion; all the implications are such as to lead the readers' minds to a fog. I mean Mr. Eliot does not discriminate in favour of a kind of religion that might be beneficial to men's minds, manners or morals, or to social amelioration.⁵²

Pound also reworded his statement, "when religion was real", to read as a very specific summary of the economic position of the Medieval Church:

Let me rewrite it thus: During those centuries when organised Christianity, namely, the Roman Catholic Church, was most active in the life of Europe, both in affairs spiritual and affairs temporal, during those Ages when religious verbal manifestations in Europe reached their most admirable heights whether in the writing of Scotus Erigena, Albertus de la Magna, Aquinas, Francis or [sic] Assisi, Dante himself; and when ecclesiastical architecture triumphed in San Zeno, St. Hilaire, the Duomo of Modena and an infinite number of chruches, the CHURCH had not abrogated her right to dissociate ECONOMIC right from Economic evil.

The abrogation of such discrimination is unpardonable, and until the Church (whether of Rome or of England) cures that weakness in herself she will have no claim to complete respect either from the average man or from members of the Elite (pronounced ee/light) Social Register of St. Louis, or from the few score or few hundred just men of enlightened intelligence, to whom Mr. Eliot seems to think I should exclusively address my communications.⁵³

Eliot not only accepted, but agreed with Pound's rewording of the above statement. Eliot did, nevertheless, deny certain of Pound's stronger allegations:

Mr. Pound does not make clear to me what is the peculiar malady of my logic. I should like to know. Naturally, if my diagnosis is wrong, my remedy is likely to be an irrelevance.

I had no intention of distracting my readers from the vital problem of economics; and Mr. Pound's objection seems to depend on the assumption that this is the only vital problem.

I still do not know whether Mr. Pound means, by "ecclesiastical bureaucrats", the whole of the Anglican and Roman hierarchies, or not. Is the Pope, for instance, a bureaucrat according to Mr. Pound's definition?⁵⁴

Pound's response to these objections high-lighted the immediacy of the economic problem in very drastic terms. At the same time Pound found himself forced once more to be specific at the expense of his tendency to use types:

It is not that economics constitute "the ONLY vital problem," but that poverty and the syphilis of the mind called the Finance-Capitalist system kill more men annually than typhoid or tuberculosis. I would not stop to discuss blue china in the midst of a cholera epidemic if I possessed means to combat the epidemic, and, in the present circumstances, I consider certain kinds of aesthetic discussion on a par with such a course.

For the rest I refer Mr. Eliot to Migne's collection of the early Church Fathers, the "Encyclopedia Britannica" or Larousse and/or any passable history of the Church. I certainly do not intend to stigmatise the "whole of the Anglican and Roman hierarchies" if by that he means each and every member of same. In the aggregate mass neither of these hierarchies has, in our day, the intellectual guts of the Mediaeval Church.

Obviously an organisation that presents itself publicly in the person of Dean Inge does not inspire my respect, nor can it be supposed to represent, invariably, a God whom any sane man could either respect or tolerate.

On the other hand a church containing Father Charles E. Coughlin is not otiose in ALL of its parts.⁵⁵

The importance of Pound's criticism lay in his contention that the Church no longer had the ability or consequently the right to regulate any morals if it would not regulate economic morals. Eliot, by extension, had surrendered that right by joining the Church, or at least his ability to exercise that right was thereby severely impaired. The position of organized religion was such that it prevented action and simply engaged in endless rounds of debate. Eliot could not agree with such a contention and so felt it necessary to clarify his position one

last time:

I am not convinced that my own concern for the future of society, in England A.D. 1934, is any less than that of Mr. Pound in Italy anno 12. On the contrary, as Mr. Pound is not interested in the survival of Christian Faith, his demands upon the future are much more likely to be satisfied than are mine. And this is the point, and indeed the only point for me of embarking upon or pursuing this correspondence. It is only a step from asserting (what appears to be true) that the economic problem must be solved if civilisation is to survive, to asserting (what I dispute) that all other problems may or ought to be neglected until the solution of the economic problem. And from this point it is only one step more into complete Secularism. The political alternatives which we are offered as alternatives to the present rotten state of affairs both seem to me wholly secular. The reason why I have been able to support the "New English Weekly" is that the doctrines it advocates do not appear to be necessarily and exclusively secular. The kind of fanaticism which Mr. Pound applies to economic reforms with which I am, in any case, in sympathy, and which he applies in a different sense to a religious institution of which I am a member, seems to me to degrade the former, and to leave the latter unaffected.⁵⁶

Pound, in his reply, denied a lack of interest in the Christian Faith and even congratulated Pope Pius XI for making the following relevant comments on economics:

'This power (economic domination) becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, are able also to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life blood to the entire economic body, and grasping, as it were, in their hands the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will.'⁵⁷

Pound continued by expressing the wish that the Anglican Church might also "show itself WORTH respecting". He denied that he was a fanatic simply because he wanted to see his ideas "put into ACTION". As well, he could not agree that his failure to meet "ecclesiastics who took an interest in theology" implied "a belief in utter 'Secularism' on my part". Eliot made no reply and so the debate was dropped.⁵⁸

By introducing the term, Secularism, Eliot was putting a name to the ills of modern society which, as observed in the previous

chapter, he felt were causing a deterioration of the cultural and moral standards of the public. He spoke on one occasion of the effect of Secularism on literature:

What I do wish to affirm is that the whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call Secularism, that it is simply unaware of, simply cannot understand the meaning of, the primacy of the supernatural over the natural life: of something which I assume to be our primary concern.⁵⁹

He went on to explain how Secularism was virtually a way of life:

There are a very large number of people in the world today who believe that all ills are fundamentally economic. Some believe that various specific economic changes alone would be enough to set the world right; others demand more or less drastic changes in the social as well, changes chiefly of two opposed types. These changes demanded, and in some places carried out, are alike in one respect, that they hold the assumptions of what I call Secularism: they concern themselves only with changes of a temporal, material, and external nature; they concern themselves with morals only of a collective nature.⁶⁰

Eliot elsewhere expressed the opinion that the encroachments of Secularism caused deterioration precisely because they cut off the regenerative value of the spiritual:

The only reactionaries today are those who object to the dictatorship of finance and the dictatorship of a bureaucracy under whatever political name it is assembled; and those who would have some law and some ideal not purely of this world. But the movement, towards the Right so-called, . . . is far more profound than any mere machinations of consciously designing interests could make it. It is a symptom of the desolation of secularism, of that loss of vitality, through the lack of replenishment from spiritual sources, which we have witnessed elsewhere, and which becomes ready for the application of the artificial stimulants of nationalism and class.⁶¹

And in still another place Eliot indicated the degree of his commitment against Secularism. It was a commitment which could very possibly allow him to accept war as a part of his morality:

There seems to be only one group of pacifists occupying an impregnable position, and that is the smallest. Those who believe that the word of God revealed to man is uncompromisingly and without exception opposed

to the taking of human life may be wrong, but they cannot be confuted. They hold a respectable position, in that they oppose, not the incidental evils of war, but war in itself as an evil; they do not maintain that it is dreadful to be killed, but that it is a deadly sin to kill. But apart from this small number, the real issue of our time is not between those who believe in recourse to war and those who do not: the frontiers are too vague. The real issue is between the secularists - whatever political or moral philosophy they support - and the anti-secularists: between those who believe only in values realizable in time and on earth, and those who believe also in values realized only out of time. Here again the frontiers are vague, but for a different reason: only because of vague thinking and the human tendency to think that we believe in one philosophy while we are really living according to another.⁶²

Although Eliot's concept of Secularism grew directly out of his debate with Pound, it would perhaps be wrong to think that Eliot intended the term to be primarily applied to or simply limited to Pound. The tenor of such essays as "Thoughts after Lambeth"⁶³ or "Poetry and Propaganda"⁶⁴ which explore the same area, though written three to four years before Eliot's application of the term, would seem to indicate that Eliot had scientific primacy in his gun's sight as much as economic primacy. Economics, after all, simply thought it could use science to achieve its ends. Eliot's criticisms of people such as Russell, or Huxley, or Whitehead, "life-forcers" as he called them, indicate his extreme concern for the separation of thought and feeling brought about by the scientific attitude. This scientific schizophrenia which impoverished the feeling of man for man, and frustrated the feeling of man for God made such radical and inconsiderate economic changes as communism and fascism possible. Secularism was also probably in the back of Eliot's mind in his objection to the use of poetry as religion. Such was his objection to I.A. Richards' comment that The Waste Land effected "a complete separation between poetry and all beliefs":

It [the statement] might also mean that the present situation is radically different from any in which poetry has been produced in the past: namely, that now there is nothing in which to believe, that Belief itself is dead; and that therefore my poem is the first to respond properly to the modern situation and not call upon Make-Believe. And it is in this connexion, apparently, that Mr. Richards observes that 'poetry is capable of saving us'.⁶⁵

Salvation by poetry was a belief which Richards apparently shared with another of Eliot's opponents:

I am sure, from the differences of environment, of period, and of mental furniture, that salvation by poetry is not quite the same thing for Mr. Richards as it was for Arnold; but so far as I am concerned these are merely different shades of blue.⁶⁶

Eliot would probably also have classified Wyndham Lewis as a Secularist as well, had Eliot wanted to engage in public polemics about Lewis. Lewis did not believe in making a religion out of art, but he did insist on leaving art free of moral considerations. Lewis wanted an aesthetic standard free of politics, and religion inevitably introduced politics simply because, through morality, it attempted to regulate behaviour. Lewis, like Eliot, was not particularly fond of the "life-forcers" or "time-cultists" as he often referred to them. But for different reasons, namely, aesthetic reasons. Lewis simply preferred space, and, at that, the classical space oriented by and for the eye. Furthermore, while Lewis rejected the time-centred thinking of modern science, particularly of relativity theories, he nevertheless insisted that the technological products of such science were valid, if not mandatory subjects for art, much as Eliot considered the mundane, unpoetic aspects of the city as a possible inspiration for new poetry. Indeed, Lewis quarreled precisely with what he considered to be a contradiction in Eliot's work - a dependence upon the temporal

in his poetry, and the insistence on the moral in his criticism. Lewis would not let Eliot have it both ways. Consequently, Lewis' book, Men without Art, engaged in a piercing attack on Eliot as moralist.

That Eliot chose not to take up Lewis's challenge must remain a mystery. It was certainly not from a lack of respect for Lewis, as evidenced in their continual correspondence, and in Eliot's continuing admiration of Lewis' prose fiction. Eliot's early appreciation of Lewis' writing was never substantially altered:

I have seen the forces of death with Mr. Chesterton at their head upon a white horse. Mr. Pound, Mr. Joyce, and Mr. Lewis write living English; one does not realize the awfulness of death until one meets with the living language.⁶⁷

Eliot and Lewis even shared a significantly similar view of the artist as primitive. Lewis placed the artist at the dawn of creation:

The artist goes back to the fish. The few centuries that separate him from the savage are a mere flea-bite to the distance his memory must stretch if it is to strike the fundamental slime of creation. And it is the condition, the very first gusto of creation in this scale of life in which we are set, that he must reach, before he, in his turn, can create!⁶⁸

In taking the artist back to the fish Lewis was simply extending an earlier observation about himself which Eliot had made:

The artist, I believe, is more primitive, as well as more civilized, than his contemporaries, his experience is deeper than civilization, and he only uses the phenomena of civilization in expressing it. Primitive instincts and the acquired habits of ages are confounded in the ordinary man. In the work of Mr. Lewis we recognize the thought of the modern and the energy of the cave-man.⁶⁹

Perhaps Eliot remained silent about Men without Art because it tended to attack personalities, or perhaps he merely felt that his own position was already clear enough.

Lewis introduced Men without Art by describing it as "a defense of contemporary art, most of which art is unquestionably satiric, or comic". Among the antagonists of contemporary art Lewis numbered what could only be Eliot's popular audience, "that deep-dyed Moralist, the public of Anglo-Saxony".⁷⁰ The mentor of that audience, Eliot himself, Lewis described as standing "in a general way" for "the marriage of 'the dumb ox' and of Bloomsbury - the 'dumb ox', in this instance, being Aquinas". Eliot was, in other words, "the Anglo-Saxon (and Anglo-Catholic) representative of continental thomistic literary criticism".⁷¹ Lewis' reason for criticizing Eliot was a matter of self-protection. Understand your enemies and you will discover how to defend yourself:

[Eliot] is preoccupied with problems of belief, as that applied to theologic, as well as to political and other forms, of belief. And as the moralist and politician are the two chief enemies of the artist today, Mr. Eliot's ethical, or rather non-ethical, standpoint, and the pseudo principle he has received from Mr. I.A. Richards, provide suggestive devices for the better defence of the small garrison of satirist-artists, invested in their cubist citadel.⁷²

To discuss, first, the involvement of Richards in this attack on art, it is necessary to return briefly to Eliot's rejection of Richards' theory about the severance of poetry and belief in The Waste Land. In trying to distinguish the poetic mentality from the scientific, Richards had suggested that the latter used scientific statement while the former used pseudo-statement. According to Richards:

A pseudo-statement is a form of words which is justified entirely by its effect in releasing or organising our impulses in attitudes (due regard being had for the better or worse organisations of these inter se); a statement [a scientific statement would be a prime example, given Richards' context], on the other hand, is justified by its truth, i.e. its correspondence, in a highly technical sense, with the fact which it states. The two have no connections with one another and they cannot conflict; their functions are too different.⁷³

Richards went on to suggest that if the pseudo-statement were given the

same kind of assent as might be given the established scientific fact, then a "magical view" or state of belief ensued. Such, it would seem, was the manner in which a religion was constituted. When that state of belief broke down, as it inevitably must because it was not scientific, then a condition of emotional helplessness resulted, since the emotions no longer responded to that pseudo-statement towards which they had been very strongly oriented. It was such a breakdown that Richards felt Eliot had registered in The Waste Land. Because Eliot had effected a complete severance between his poetry and all beliefs, Richards implied, apparently, that The Waste Land had shifted poetic possibilities from the realm of the pseudo-statement to that of the scientific statement.⁷⁴

Lewis basically agreed with Richards that Eliot had achieved a separation of poetry and belief, and that, consequently, Eliot's poetry really lay in the realm of the scientific or, as it were, Secular. Lewis also felt that Eliot, in achieving such Secular orientation in his poetry was a rebel. Lewis could therefore not stand to see Eliot play the moralist in criticism and continue at the same time to write such revolutionary poetry. In other words, Lewis was accusing Eliot of being a Secularist in poetry, while being an anti-Secularist in prose. Richards was to be thanked for keeping Eliot's dualist position in the open:

Entirely apart from his particular differences with Mr. Richards, with whom he has run so long in tandem, it is evident that Mr. Eliot will be forced (largely owing to the salutary action of his partner, who was not inclined evidently to have him there forever upon such very pseudo terms, and who clearly forced the issue by the remark previously quoted [a reference to Richards' agreement with Arnold that "Poetry is capable of saving us."]) to go into critical opposition with everybody not a certified church-goer. - Of course, there may have been pressure and heckling from many quarters [Pound?] of late - I do not know: but even so I believe that we owe a great deal to Mr. I.A. Richards, for sternly

clarifying Mr. Eliot's position as critic, and indeed as poet, and for forbidding him from being so comfortably pseudo as he would have liked to have remained. In other words, Mr. Richards was not prepared to allow him to continue, on false pretences, to enjoy the gratifying advantages of the 'rebel' in art, and simultaneously the advantages of an opposite sort in criticism: and - still less - to connive at his indefinitely mixing theory and practice up into a peculiar cocktail of his own.⁷⁵

Furthermore, Lewis suggested that Eliot was, in spite of his contrary critical position, actually promoting, in conjunction with Richards, a new version of the art-for-art's-sake aesthetic. This new "Disbelief Theory" was, in Lewis' eyes, the most important literary theory of the time:

But meanwhile we have got here, in this Eliot-Richards combination, a new aesthetic of art pur, which has, I believe, never been intelligently examined. The Disbelief Theory we could label it for convenience. It is, I dare say, the most important literary theory, upon the English scene, since that of Walter Pater, and deserves all our attention. I will attempt therefore to outline this new art-for art's sake - or stylists' evangel - universal and 'catholic' in the popular sense - for, however disguised, that is what I believe it is.⁷⁶

Such, then, was the involvement of Richards in what Lewis considered to be Eliot's moralist attack on the artist's citadel. The more important part of Eliot's attack, the part relating specifically to Eliot's ethical and religious position, was simply made easier to understand by what Richards had said about the separation of poetry and belief; it did not directly involve Richards.

Probably the prime reason for considering Lewis' criticism of Eliot is that in refuting Eliot's moralist pose, Lewis took the argument directly to the central core of Eliot's thinking, that is, the question of Original Sin. Neither Pound nor Richards were so prepared to argue with Eliot on his own ground. Lewis began his criticism with certain

remarks about the impossibility of sincerity in writing, especially as the theory had been developed by Richards, and then related the problem of sincerity to Eliot's theory of the depersonalization of the poet. Lewis quoted Eliot with the implication that Eliot believed that in order for the poet to be sincere he must become impersonal:

'What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career. What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.'⁷⁷

Lewis then proceeded to suggest that this depersonalization implied much the same separation of emotion and intellect as Richards was wont to believe was caused by scientific method. Indeed, depersonalization fitted in very nicely with the theories of such a scientist as Bertrand Russell:

Of course I know that such a statement as "the poet has, not 'a personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality," fits in very well, for instance, with Bertrand Russell's account of the psyche - a rendezvous as it were for a bundle of sticks, not the sticks but just the rendezvous - or with the functional picture of the Behaviorist. But those are not the affiliations to which Mr. Eliot is most apt to give his official recognition. And of course he never misses an opportunity of showing his disapproval of Bertrand Russell. So that, it would seem, should not be invoked to help us. But what I think may be said is that in a great deal of his literary criticism Mr. Eliot has indeed tended to confuse scientific values with art values. It might be a good thing - I do not say it is - for an artist to have a 'personality,' and for a scientist not to have a personality: though here of course I am not using a 'personality' in the Ballyhoo sense - I do not mean an individualist abortion, bellowing that it wants at all costs to 'express' itself, and feverishly answering the advertisement of the quack who promises to develop such things overnight. I mean only a constancy and consistency in being, as concretely as possible, one thing - at peace with itself, if not with the outer world, though that is likely to follow after an interval of struggle⁷⁸

Lewis then suggested that it was only one step from depersonalization to Richards' disbelief theory. If the poet was expressing a medium he need not believe, himself, what the medium was saying. It no longer mattered whether or not the poet was sincere:

Indeed, Mr. Eliot's is an elaborate system of dogmatic insincerity: and Mr. Richards' (in a somewhat different context, and as a matter of fact in rather a more robust manner) is also essentially a doctrine of the insincere. For you cannot resolutely cut adrift the pseudo and the fanciful from all beliefs, and in the violent subjectivism that must ensue attain 'sincerity.'⁷⁹

Lewis then proceeded to show exactly how Eliot as moralist was attacking art. The direct attack came from the apparently non-moral and purely aesthetic suggestion that the poet must suppress his personality, that is, rob himself of the opportunity of being sincere, of saying what he really felt. But why such suppression? Because the personality was infected by Original Sin:

Mr. Eliot, according to my notion, is insincere: he has allowed himself to be robbed of his personality, such as it is, and he is condemned to an unreal position. I see his difficulty of course, and understand that in the first instance he was moved by a desire to effect a total separation between what he regarded as fine in his personality from what he regarded as unsatisfactory. And he has always been particularly alive to the sensation which has found a theological expression in the doctrine of original sin.⁸⁰

The danger of the doctrine Original Sin, as Lewis saw it, lay exactly in the quality which Eliot had found so attractive in Baudelaire.⁸¹

If a person sinned enough he would find God eventually, because he would soon find Satan:

When you reflect that Christianity literally stands or falls by this doctrine, that of the Fall and the Atonement, it is easy to see how great the temptation may prove to become more 'sinful' than is strictly necessary - to embrace sin (even if by sin is meant nothing more than an envious and unpolished disposition, a rancorous or a hasty temper) - in fact to prove the Fall, as it were, and tearfully to invite the graces of the Atonement. The fact that men are mischievous and disagree-

able little animals for the most part, may be accounted for in various ways: but the orthodox way is by pointing to the power of the great curse that was laid upon all mankind at the Fall.⁸²

While Lewis could not deny that man was under a very "portentious curse", he felt, nevertheless, that a doctrine of almost total depravity was an exaggeration. Furthermore he thought that the artist could not escape his weaknesses simply by suppressing his personality. Such a course would merely make the work of the curse all the more subtle:

This may seem to you a very long way round to travel to reach a solution of the personality problem we have been discussing here: but I believe that some such method as this is the best under the circumstances. The personality is not, I think, quite the pariah it becomes in the pages of Mr. Eliot: I do not believe in the anonymous, 'impersonal,' catalytic, for the very good reason that I am sure the personality is in that as much as in the other part of this double-headed oddity, however thoroughly disguised, and is more apt to be a corrupting influence in that arrangement than in the more usual one, where the artist is identified with his beliefs. If there is to be an 'insincerity,' I prefer it should occur in the opposite sense - namely that "the man, the personality" should exaggerate, a little artificially perhaps, his beliefs - rather than leave a meaningless shell behind him, and go to hide in a volatilized hypostasization of his personal feelings. That may be more 'insincere' in the one sense, but for the extrovert activities it is more satisfactory: the man is thus 'most himself' (even if a little too much himself to be quite the perfect self, on occasion): and through being less cosmopolitan in the sense of the temporal or chronologic cosmos, he must in the end be more effective.⁸³

If it be considered that the whole orientation of Eliot's dramatic, Elizabethan, Baudelairian, and music-hall interests centred around Original Sin and its manifestations in the modern metropolis, any abatement of that orientation such as Lewis suggested, and any statement that depersonalization is simply a political manoeuvre on the part of fallen man, would simply weaken Eliot's position to a point where it would become highly suspect. That Eliot himself came to suspect his own position, is certainly a possibility, if a remark he made in 1959 can be given any

credence:

I am no longer very much interested in my own theories about poetic drama, especially those put forward before 1934. I have thought less about theories since I have given more time to writing for the theater.⁸⁴

Given the facts that The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism was published in November of 1933, After Strange Gods in February of 1934, and Men without Art sometime soon after in 1934, it would not be out of place to think that Lewis' criticisms were involved in Eliot's self-evaluation.⁸⁵ It would nevertheless be very wrong to suggest that Eliot completely rejected the complex of ideas which centred on his acceptance of the doctrine of Original Sin. Their presence in the plays is strong proof to the contrary. Rather, what seems to have happened is that, the ideas having been worked out and defined for better or for worse, Eliot let them become a subconscious texturing for his work.

What was perhaps of even more value about Men without Art than Lewis' rebuttal of Eliot's position, was Lewis' provision of a viable alternative for the role of the moralist. In the first place, Lewis saw the moralist mentality as doomed to a condition which even a person like Eliot would undoubtedly abhor:

What we ultimately shall arrive at, of course, in the case of the critique of the ethical judgement, is a sort of Nietzschean universe, in which 'good' signifies merely the values of the master-caste, and 'bad' the values of the servile caste. And the moralist-critic will exhibit a fine irresponsibility in his juggling with these very ill-defined values, it will too often be found. He will even belittle morals in the interests of some esoteric higher ethos.⁸⁶

On the other hand, the position for which Lewis opted, the role of the satirist, could, so he thought, avoid the irresponsibility of the moralist position, partly because such a role did not have to make

judgements, and also partly because it was a more basic role than that of the moralist. The satirist was, consequently, the logical development of that view of the artist as primitive which Lewis shared with Eliot:

It could perhaps be asserted, even, that the greatest satire cannot be moralistic at all: if for no other reason, because no mind of the first order, expressing itself in art, has ever itself been taken in, nor consented to take in others, by the crude injunctions of any purely moral code. This does not mean that the mind in question was wanting in that consciousness of itself as a rational subject, which is never absent in an intellect of such an order: but that its abstract theory, as well as its concrete practice, of moral judgements, would differ from the common run, and that their introduction would merely confuse the issue. The artistic impulse is a more primitive one than the ethical: so much is this the case - so little is it a mere dialect of the rational language in which our human laws are formulated, but, on the contrary, an entirely independent tongue - that it is necessary for the artist to change his skin almost, in passing from one department into the other.⁸⁷

Lewis was sensitive, however, to the possible objection that satire involved some sort of "moral sanction", for it usually placed some lesser object in contrast with some greater one. Lewis answered that even the greatest object was itself a shadow, and that, furthermore, the laughter which such satire involved was healthy in comparison with the effects of moral condemnation:

But how can satire stand without the moral sanction? you may ask. For satire can only exist in contrast to something else - it is a shadow, and an ugly shadow at that, of some perfection. And it is so disagreeable, and so painful (at least in the austere sense in which we appear to be defining it here) that no one would pursue it for its own sake, or take up the occupation of satirist unless compelled to do so, out of indignation at the spectacle of the neglect of beauty and virtue. - That is I think the sort of objection that, at this point, we should expect to have to meet.

Provisionally I will reply as follows: it is my belief that 'satire' for its own sake - as much as anything else for its own sake - is possible: and that even the most virtuous and well-proportioned of men is only a shadow, after all, of some perfection; a shadow of an

imperfect, and hence an 'ugly,' sort. And as to laughter, if you allow it in one place you must, I think, allow it in another. Laughter - humour and wit - has a function in relation to our tender consciousness; a function similar to that of art. It is the pre-server much more than the destroyer. And, in a sense, everyone should be laughed at or else no one should be laughed at. It seems that ultimately that is the alternative.⁸⁸

With a few elaborations, some of which follow, Lewis stayed with this provisional defense of his theory. A summary of Lewis' view of man as machine, and of what Lewis called 'Americanization' will provide a basic insight into that theory (of the possibility of satire, and of satire as non-moral).

The central feature of Lewis' satiric attitude lay in a view which Eliot could with all certainty be expected to have called a Secularist view. That view, which in itself made satire possible, was that characters in satire were machines, personages without thought or will:

Is it not just because they [characters in satire] are such machines, governed by routine - or creatures that stagnate, as it were 'in a leaden cistern' - that the satirist, in the first instance, has considered them suitable for satire?⁸⁹

The reason that characters in satire were machines, so far as Lewis was concerned, stemmed directly from that fact that the real thing, the ordinary living specimen of homo sapiens, was himself a machine, whether he liked it or not:

'Shakespeare's characters are men: Ben Jonson's are more like machines,' Hazlitt exclaims. And I have replied - 'Of course they are! - in both cases that is just what they were intended to be.' But 'men' are undoubtedly, to a greater or less extent, machines. And there are those amongst us who are revolted by this reflection, and there are those who are not. Men are sometimes so palpably machines, their machination is so transparent, that they are comic, as we say. And all we mean by that, is that our consciousness is pitched up to the very moderate altitude of relative independence at which we live - at which level we have the

illusion of being autonomous and 'free.' But if one of us exposes too much his 'works,' and we start seeing him as a thing, then - in subconsciously referring this back to ourselves - we are astonished and shocked, and we bark at him - we laugh - in order to relieve our emotion.⁹⁰

While Eliot would no doubt have opposed these remarks, he could nevertheless have sympathized with some of their intent. He had himself a few years previously discussed the relationship of man and the machine in terms which suggest what his reaction to Lewis' ideas might have been:

I can quite understand that during one brief period of time, the last two hundred years or so, conditions have been particularly favourable to prophecy. That is, life has become increasingly mechanized; and as men have been gradually discovering what they could do with the machine, it was not impossible for one man of genius to predict with accuracy some of the things that the machine was to do with men. Man thus learns to predict his own actions, by making himself into the likeness of those creations whose actions he has determined. Economic determinism, like any other kind of determinism within the scope of human mind, is possible, and has its legitimate application, only by a rigorous selection of elements within a restricted limit of time. And this selection is also a selection of values, and any narrow adherence to one set of values tends to be a menace. If your values are religious, then you may say that it is better that a million bodies should burn rather than one soul; if they are aesthetic, you may say that it is better that a million lives should be lost rather than one cathedral; if your values are humanitarian, then it is better that art and religion should perish rather than one man die of hunger.⁹¹

Lewis did not of course deny that some men, a very select few, possessed what might be called "executive will and intelligence", but they were simply masters of the masses who existed in a state of total passivity. Lewis felt that a writer like Hemingway spoke in the voice of such masses. In Hemingway's speech the voice of the "dumb ox" covered the machine of the masses (the "million lives" to be saved or lost?) with a bovine skin:

This is the voice of the 'folk', of the masses, who are the cannon-fodder, the cattle outside the slaughter-house, serenely chewing the cud- of those to whom things are done, in contrast to those who have executive will and intelligence. It is itself innocent of politics- one might almost add alas! That does not affect its quality as art. The expression of the soul of the dumb ox would have a penetrating beauty of its own, if it were uttered with genius- with bovine genius (and in the case of Hemingway that is what has happened): just as much as would the folk-song of the baboon, or of the 'Praying Mantis.' But where the politics crop up is that if we take this to be the typical art of a civilization - and there is no serious writer who stands higher in Anglo-Saxony today than does Ernest Hemingway - then we are by the same token saying something very definite about that civilization.⁹²

Lewis was not particularly happy about seeing man as a machine, but nevertheless accepted man on such terms for his satire. Closely associated with this mechanistic view, was his perception of what he called "Americanization":

One of the facts of which the 'visual' intelligence is peculiarly aware is the importance of the geographic background - the visual medium, as it were, in which men exist. This factor is for us of critical moment. But today it is a commonplace that our European urban life is being 'Americanized.'⁹³

Americanization involved, for one thing, the barren or frigid mentality associated both with New England Puritanism and with the vast emptiness of the American landscape.⁹⁴ As this American influence worked its way into European life it robbed that life of its texturing and was possibly responsible for the similar lack of texture, or abstractness of modern European art:

. . . the rapid changes in our cities, and in a lesser degree in our countryside, whether they are 'Americanizing' us or not, are at least depriving us of the secular upholstery of our continent. And the more and more disembodied character of our art is no doubt in response to this external impoverishment. Just as I think a very obstinate American could make something of the 'American Scene' (even without passing over into a demented expressionism, as a desperate way out of the difficulty) so I think the intensification of the European Waste, physical and spiritual, does not preclude the possibility of artistic expression.

But what I do say is that as progressively the Europeans, like a vast flock of sheep, allow their hereditary property to be pillaged, and find themselves more and more drifting into a sort of 'Barrens' - and as their artists lose contact with nature, driven into the subterranean caverns of their memory and inherited imagination, that the products of the intellect will grow thinner and more shadowy, the very eyesight itself will become impaired - at the best an affair of abstract notation rather than of physical gusto.⁹⁵

One of the peculiar effects of American sterility was its influence on the thinking of people like Henry James and T.S. Eliot.

In the case of James there was a subjectivization of activity:

No one, of the last hundred years, writing in English, is more worthy of serious consideration than Henry James. But from a cause as concrete - and regrettable - as a serious and crippling accident in boyhood would have been, his activities were all turned inwards instead of outwards. That is the point that I would make. He was, by force of circumstances, led to conceive of art as a disembodied statement of abstract values, rather than as a sensuous interpretation of values, participating in a surface life. 'America to James signified failure and destruction. It was the dark country, the sinister country, where earth is a quicksand . . . where men were turned into machines . . . the American artist, in the American air, was a doomed man: pitfalls surrounded him on every side.'⁹⁶

With Eliot the problem of Americanization reached a paradoxical extreme.

He fled in terror from the fiend only to discover that the fiend had fled before him:

As a contemporary illustration to all this, imagine Mr. T.S. Eliot's horror, just as he was doubtless congratulating himself upon his timely escape from that 'dark country,' that 'sinister country,' that country 'where the earth is a quicksand,' and his timely establishment in a land that is still fairly 'well-furnished,' where every blade of grass possesses an historic identity - in pre-war Britain in fine, to behold all this orderly little cosmos turning into ashes beneath his feet, at the blast of war, and then progressively assuming more and more, socially, the dread physiognomy of the desert from which he was in flight! - We do not, indeed, have to look very far for the origin of the Waste Land.⁹⁷

A further element, which Lewis associated, however indirectly, with man as machine, and with Americanization, was mob culture. This culture was, for all intents and purposes the same as that which Eliot

thought was destroying music-hall culture with its traditions stretching back to Elizabethan and pre-Elizabethan times. In describing this culture Lewis made several criticisms of Eliot's understanding of Elizabethan and contemporary tastes. The following, a key passage to Lewis's understanding of both sets of tastes, can be read as a direct counter to a remark of Eliot's quoted above on page forty-eight:

That the second-hand violence of the dime novel, or of Adelphi Melodrama, has always attracted the mob- or in a more openly brutal time, the bear-pit and cock-fight- is true enough: but what has been really peculiar to us (for the Elizabethan man about town scorned the tragedy of blood) has been that the most educated, as well as the least educated, participated in these pleasures almost to the exclusion of any other. The Cabinet Minister, the philosophy-don, the Harley Street Specialist, the 'rebel' poet, as much as the scullery maid and office-boy, poured over a long succession of detective-fictions and nothing else. This has been one of the features of our proletarianization: our pleasures have become the pleasures of the mob. You have to imagine, for example, a Chesterfield, a Pitt, or a Burke occupied in their spare moments with nothing but books of the order of the 'Crime Club,' or the Gem Library, to get the point of this perhaps (for the average man has to resort to artifice to regard a little impersonally his own time, and nothing seems more natural after a year or two than what has the sanction of the will of the majority).⁹⁸

Put another way, the "pleasures of the mob" signified to Lewis the reduction of values to the lowest common denominator. It was this reduction, rather than the agglomeration of all classes into the middle class (Eliot's idea) which was causing the theatre to decay:

. . . our Theatre has fallen into a state of complete decay: and the commercialization of the book-trade (of publishing, that is) has organized on an unprecedented scale, among educated people, the values and tastes of the cinema-mob. And of course all these things hang together, it is a perfect co-ordination of inferior values - the values of the least gifted and the least educated.⁹⁹

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that neither Richards, Pound, nor Lewis quarrelled with Eliot's desire to defend the integrity of the individual through the preservation of language. Eliot was quite

welcome to write a poetry which would influence language towards greater communication and towards more precise emotional control. But neither of those three critics accepted the thesis of a direct relation between language, emotion, and morality. Richards, in pointing to a complete separation of poetry and belief, was implying, whether he realized it or not, that Eliot himself had not established a connection between language, emotion, and morality in his poetry. Pound on the other hand felt that a defense of the integrity of the individual involved a defense of his economic rights. What, for instance, was the use of writing if the writer could not be sufficiently paid, and the reader did not have an income which would allow him to benefit from the writer's efforts? And finally, Lewis, advancing on Richards' criticism, suggested that not only was there no connection between language, emotion, and morality, but also that any attempt to so connect them would be detrimental to the art involved.

CHAPTER FOUR

THREE CITY RITUALS

The perception, in *The Waste Land*, of a dramatic struggle between man and his city environment, found its conceptual amplification in Eliot's insistence on the interconnection of language, emotion, and morality. Fundamentally, man protected himself from total take-over by the city environment in so far as he maintained healthy emotional reactions which required both a precise and adaptable (vital) language, and a set of moral attitudes which could structure his emotions without suppressing them. On the other hand, the same struggle between man and his city transcended the merely descriptive level, in which it first appeared in Eliot's poetry, to be reincarnated on the level of action in Eliot's poetic drama. This re-incarnation was Eliot's response to the voice of the Thunder. If to give, to sympathize, and to control were the conditions of salvation for man, then something more than the images and rhythms of poetry was required to explore those conditions. That something was the stage.

Mr. Eliot's interest in the stage brought him to the realization that modern drama, particularly realistic drama, was sadly lacking in artistic conventions. The more the stage strove after realism the more it threw off artistic limitations. Just as language and emotion became vague in the theatre's indulgence in subjective sensation, so the theatre's sensitivity to human relationships, and, therefore, to Good and Evil, disappeared. Indeed, the theatre in some cases even set out to destroy

existing social conventions in favour of the prevailing liberal attitude of self-indulgence. As a consequence of this degeneration Eliot was faced with the task of establishing his own dramatic conventions. He voiced a definite preference for the living moral attitudes of the music-hall in which was to be found the seeds of a possible English myth. He even felt that the music-hall might be transformed into the art of poetic drama.¹ The music-hall at the very least made Eliot aware of the possibilities of convention at a time when theatre had lost its conventions.

The convention which Eliot choose to use was the very element which had decided him on a career as a poetic dramatist, the convention of action. Eliot came to the theatre to explore the action of the city, the give, sympathize, and control to which The Waste Land pointed. With the help of action Eliot was able to take the raw materials of the city, its language, emotion, and morality, and transform these materials into rhythm, ritual, and myth respectively. Action transformed language into rhythmic sound, the rhythms in turn aroused the emotions. Emotional reactions in their turn constituted the ritual purgation or catharsis. The structure of the purgation in its turn took on the cognitive values of reflection. This reflection on the significance of the purgation was myth. Out of the theoretic convention of action came the three primary and very concrete conventions of rhythm, ritual, and myth. Of these three, the most important convention, the one from which the other two were derived was rhythm:

The essentials of drama were, as we might expect, given by Aristotle: "poetry, music, and dancing constitute in Aristotle a group by themselves, their common element being imitation by means of rhythm - rhythm which admits of being applied to words, sounds, and the movements of the body". . . . It is the rhythm, so utterly absent from modern drama, either verse or prose, and which interpreters of Shakespeare do their best to suppress, which makes Massine and Charlie Chaplin the great actors that they are, and which makes the juggling of Rastelli more cathartic than a performance of "A Doll's House." As for the catharsis, we must remember that Aristotle was accustomed to dramatic performances only in rhythmic form; and that therefore he was not called upon to determine how far the catharsis could be effected by the moral or intellectual significance of the play without its verse form and proper declamation.²

Since rhythm was so central to Eliot's poetic drama, some discussion of rhythm, and its symbol, the drum, will be in order before going on to discuss, in the present chapter, the rhythm, ritual, and myth of Sweeney Agonistes, The Rock, and Murder in the Cathedral. The naturalistic surface which Eliot introduced into the later plays, and under which rhythm, ritual, and myth were submerged, will necessitate a separate chapter.

Eliot appears to have been attracted to the drum because of its elemental simplicity. The drum was original, its use preceded meaning and therefore rendered it a perennial source of renewal for the spirit:

It is . . . possible to assert that primitive man acted in a certain way and then found a reason for it. An unoccupied person, finding a drum, may be seized with a desire to beat it; but unless he is an imbecile he will be unable to continue beating it, and thereby satisfying a need (rather than a "desire"), without finding a reason for so doing. The reason may be the long continued drought. The next generation or the next civilization will find a more plausible reason for beating a drum. Shakespeare and Racine - or rather the developments which led up to them - each found his own reason. The reasons may be divided into tragedy and comedy. We still have similar reasons, but we have lost the drum.³

It was probably Eliot's search for a drum of his own that led him to understand the primitive nature of the artist which Lewis insisted upon. It must however be emphasized that the primitive quality was in the artist, and, therefore essential, not something to be added externally:

Poetry begins, I dare say, with a savage beating a drum in a jungle, and it retains that essential of percussion and rhythm; hyperbolically one might say that the poet is older than other human beings. . . .⁴

Because the poet was older than his fellow men there was no need for him to take on an external "primitivist" role. A return to the drum was not a simple return to the past. Eliot made this point clear in a later poem:

We cannot revive old factions
We cannot restore old policies
Or follow an antique drum.⁵

One of the themes of Sweeney Agonistes, that of the tropical island might even have been intended as a satire on the romance of the return to nature. Certainly Wyndham Lewis made it clear that his own interest in the primitive nature of the artist was not a return to the past. Lewis felt an equal antipathy for romantic art and for "child" art in so far as both had "primitivist" leanings:

That, to start with, it [the cult of the child] is connected with the cult of the primitive and the savage, is obvious. The same impulse that takes the romantic painter, Gauguin, to the South Sea paradise, takes a similarly romantic person of to-day to the Utopia of childhood, Only the latter has the Heaven of Childhood inside himself (it is a time-paradise); whereas Gauguin had to go a long way to reach Samoa. That is the advantage that time-travel has over space-travel.⁶

Instead of returning to the past, what was needed was a drum of the present, a drum that would release the basic impulses of man as they

existed in the present. Lewis demonstrated the kind of castration that would occur if man tried to live without a drum:

A more sensible notion [than Ruskin's desire to destroy all machinery because it was destroying a way of life], more sweeping were it implemented, perhaps, but equally impracticable, would be this: Let us destroy all the drums in the world - kettle-drums, side-drums, tom-toms, etc. - and arrange to hang any man discovered making one. Even to indulge in the 'devil's tattoo' would become a criminal offence.

There you would have, it would be possible to contend, a tremendous innovation. It would banish at one stroke a great deal of gratuitous emotionalism. We should be well rid of that, you might believe. The time-honoured method of calling people to battle, to rut, to religious ecstasy, to every known delirium, would then not exist. Yet the individual advocating this measure we should call 'romantic' - very romantic. It is not practicable. It is even ridiculous. It is reminiscent of the day-dream of the naïf prohibitionist. The same applies to dreams of banishing machinery.⁷

It is significant that Lewis should have associated the drum and the machine as he did, for Eliot seems to have felt that any new poetic drum needed to take into account the auditory effects of modern machinery on the contemporary listener:

Perhaps the conditions of modern life (think how large a part is now played in our sensory life by the internal combustion engine!) have altered our perception of rhythms. At any rate, the recognized forms of speech-verse are not as efficient as they should be; probably a new form will be devised out of colloquial speech.⁸

Eliot also experimented with a modern machine-drum in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night". The rhapsody is created by wind buffeting through gas street lamps. As the wind buffets, Eliot notes, "Every street lamp that I pass/Beats like a fatalistic drum", drawing attention to some visual image.⁹ The progress of the poem to its final inversion demonstrates a remarkable genius on Eliot's part for turning the drum as content into a functional, structuring device in the oral medium itself. The poem becomes what it says. Sweeney Agonistes took the drum one step

further by incorporating it as a subconscious structuring element from the very beginning of the play. Here the drum may well have been "fatalistic" but it was also modern, and very definitely related to the machine-gun rhythms of modern jazz. The heavy beat enabled Eliot to take whatever metaphysical and esoteric, or primitive and seemingly unpoetic themes and emotions he desired, and give them contemporary relevance. The drum beat of Sweeney Agonistes is in fact a very precise demonstration of what Eliot called the auditory imagination. Like the auditory imagination, the barbaric beat of Sweeney Agonistes very effectively sinks "to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end".¹⁰ Perhaps the auditory imagination is just a technical word for the drum. The "primitive and forgotten" Irish myth which the beat of Sweeney will be seen to reproduce certainly suggests such an identification. In Sweeney Agonistes Eliot took as his basic rhythmic phrase or drum beat, the key name of Pereira. In each half line at the beginning of the play there is some variant of the rhythm of that name, and the structure of each half line or line tends to repeat itself in the following unit. Thus, in the first two half-lines there are four repetitions of the basic rhythmic phrase, and in the first six lines there are five structural pairs:

DUSTY

How about Pereira

DORIS

What about Pereira?

I don't care.

DUSTY

You don't care!

Who pays the rent?

DORIS

Yes he pays the rent

DUSTY

Well some men don't and some men do
Some men don't and you know who

DORIS

You can have Pereira

DUSTY

What about Pereira?

[1 - 6]

In the end the whole play has become a ritual response to the name of Pereira.¹¹ The rhythm and its associated emotions of fear and mystery create the fundamental perceptual element or acoustical atmosphere in which the characters live. The characters are immediately involved in and speak with the rhythm of the name. It is an atmosphere from which none can escape for somebody has to pay the rent, and that somebody is Pereira:

SWEENEY

• • •
We all gotta do what we gotta do
We're gona sit here and drink this booze
We're gona sit here and have a tune
We're gona stay and we're gona go
And somebody's gotta pay the rent

DORIS

I know who.

SWEENEY

But that's nothing to me and nothing to you.

[303 - 315]

The rhythm of Pereira becomes ritual through the repetition of the name and through the repetition of the corresponding emotions and reactions which the name provokes. Repetition of sound creates rhythm, and repetition of rhythm creates ritual or dance, as Eliot noted:

The drama was originally ritual; and ritual, consisting of a set of repeated movements, is essentially a dance. It is a pity that Dr. W.O.E. Oesterley, who has written an excellent study of primitive religious dances, did not pursue the dance into drama. It is also a pity that he falls into the common trap of interpretation, by formulating intelligible reasons for the primitive dancer's dancing.

Repetition of movement, in so far as it concerns drama, includes repetition of sound and emotion, and is indeed one with sound and emotion. The pattern into which the repetition is impelled by the original rhythmic impulse suggests a post-factum meaning or interpretation which is usually expressed in terms of myth. In the case of *Sweeney Agonistes*, the impulse of Pereira leads to a classic and fearful confrontation with some fate (catharsis). This pattern reflects a similar pattern of an ancestral Sweeney of Irish legendry. The ritual of *Sweeney Agonistes* re-enacts the myth of his ancestor. Before going into the question of myth and interpretation, it will, therefore, be helpful to sort out the ritual structures of *Sweeney Agonistes*.

In the first part, or "Fragment of a Prologue", there are three principal conversations. Each conversation is an emotional response to an impulse. These conversations are rituals in two senses. Each response contains within itself repeated rhythmic phrases which create a suggestion of the mechanical movement of the characters, and at the same time, each response has the air of being a habit, of being something which has happened regularly in the past. There is first the

ritual of putting off the monied-nuisance, Pereira. This is a very ticklish ritual, for Pereira pays the rent. The emotional response, then, which impells the ritual is one of simple anxiety. The slight nastiness of the situation is indicated by Doris' little temper tantrum with the telephone:

Well can't you stop that horrible noise?
Pick up the receiver

[25 - 26]

As soon as Pereira is put off, the characters go through the ritual of telling their fortunes, a ritual which prepares their emotional responses to the events of the coming evening. Their immediate reaction to the cards is a superstitious fear of death, a reaction which intensifies the emotional level created by the simple anxiety of the previous ritual. A third ritual, the welcoming of guests, tempers the prevailing mood with the emotion of happy greetings.

The second part, or "Fragment of an Agon", raises or intensifies the level of ritual from that of common recurrence to that of religious celebration - a repetition or re-enactment of a significant event. At the same time, in correspondence with this religious intensification, the repetition of rhythmic phrases takes on the character of ritualistic chant. The significant event is Sweeney's cooking of an egg; it is a re-enactment of the life process:

SWEENEY

. . .
You see this egg
You see this egg
Well that's life on a crocodile isle.
. . .
Nothing at all but three things.

DORIS

What things?

SWEENEY

Birth, and copulation and death.
That's all, that's all, that's all, that's all,
Birth, and copulation, and death.

[171 - 173, 183 - 187]

Four different death chants surround this re-enactment of the life process. The first is a satiric chant about the cannibalistic nature of religious conversion. Then, after the egg passage, comes a chant on the philosophy of boredom as death. This second chant is accompanied by an illustrative song and dance pattern. The movement set up by the song and dance is a formal, ritual response to the boredom inherent in the supposedly simplistic life lived on a tropical island. Next follows a very concrete and even Secularistic chant in which Sweeney recounts murder, city-style. The emotional level in each chant transforms the previous emotion into a more intense reaction to death. The light-hearted hilarity of the cannibal chant becomes the distaste of boredom, which in turn becomes the fear of murder. The fear is then brought to catharsis in the final chant as all the emotion is directed in a very visceral, satiric way at the audience. The culmination of pure emotion comes with the dreaded knocking.

Just as the rituals derive originally from the drum beat or rhythmic phrase of Pereira's name, so the pattern of the rituals sets forth a myth. Eliot's remark that Oesterley made an error by interpreting or finding reasons for rituals lends a clue to an understanding of the process by which ritual becomes myth. The reason that it is

wrong simply to interpret ritual is that ritual itself is an interpretation. In describing a paper on The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual which he had written for Josiah Royce, Eliot made the following remarks:

I made an humble attempt to show that in many cases no interpretation of a rite could explain its origin. For the meaning of the series of acts is to the performers themselves an interpretation; the same ritual remaining practically unchanged may assume different meanings for different generations of performers; and the rite may even have originated before 'meaning' meant anything at all.¹³

Eliot went on to say that any ritual, in so far as it is an interpretation, is an interpretation of its own time, no matter what its origins nor the degree to which it remains intact. He concluded, therefore, that both history and drama are themselves not interpretations of the past, no matter what time and place they deal with, but interpretations of the present.

A ritual becomes ritual by repeating or re-enacting an event. It does not, however, interpret that past event by such repetition, but rather uses that past event to interpret its own time. The past event used to interpret the present is the myth.¹⁴ The myth therefore is an instrument of, rather than an object of, interpretation. A major mistake in Eliot criticism has been made by Eliot critics, who, in the course of interpreting Eliot's plays (rather than interpreting Eliot's times with the help of his plays), have taken the plays out of their contemporary context, and related them to the context of the myths which Eliot co-opted from the past. Carol Smith, for instance, has provided a glaring example of the kind of fault which this procedure can lead to, in her interpretation of Sweeney Agonistes.¹⁵ She tried to relate

Sweeney to the phallic rituals of ancient Greece by suggesting a correspondence between the structures of the phallic rituals as described in the theories of F.M. Cornford, and the structure of Sweeney. Indeed, the correspondence is there, as is implied in Eliot's use of such titles as Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama or "Fragment of a Prologue" and "Fragment of an Agon". Certain of Cornford's remarks even suggest a possible meaning of the play:

The Agon is the beginning of the sacrifice in its primitive dramatic form - the conflict between the good and evil principles, Summer and Winter, Life and Death. The good spirit is slain, dismembered, cooked and eaten in the communal feast, and yet brought back to life. These acts survive in the standing features of the comic plot between the Parabasis and the Exodus. Finally comes the sacred Marriage of the risen God, restored to life and youth to be the husband of the Mother Goddess. This marriage is the necessary consummation of the Phallic ritual, which, when it takes a dramatic form, simulates the union of Heaven and Earth for the renewal of all life in Spring.¹⁶

Cornford's theory, when applied to Sweeney, would make Sweeney's talk of the egg correspond to the Agon, the bamboo song correspond to the Parabasis, and the story of the girl in the lye bath ("Death is life and life is death"[305]) to the marriage of life and death. But - and it is a big objection - Cornford's are twentieth-century theories. There is no use of the past here to explain the present. If, as Eliot suggested, the mythical method involves "a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity"¹⁷, what myth could be involved in paralleling a contemporary theory and a contemporary situation? That Eliot was avoiding a simple confirmation of contemporary theories is perhaps suggested by his use of the word, fragment, which, if anything, spoofs archeology. Smith's use of Cornford aids in an understanding of Sweeney Agonistes to about the same degree that the following remarks of

Eliot's on cannibalism do:

Understanding involves an area more extensive than that of which one can be conscious; one cannot be outside and inside at the same time. What we ordinarily mean by understanding of another people, of course, is an approximation towards understanding which stops short at the point at which the student would begin to lose some essential of his own culture. The man who, in order to understand the inner world of a cannibal tribe, has partaken of the practice of cannibalism, has probably gone too far: he can never quite be one of his own folk again.¹⁸

There may be a sense in which Sweeney is at least a potential cannibal, but not of human flesh. In other words, Sweeney is an interpretation of something other than, say, the cannibalistic life of some natives living along the Amazon.

Clearly then, if Eliot did not use contemporary theories of Greek scholarship, or of the nature of cannibalism, in Sweeney Agonistes, for the purpose of interpreting the present; and, if the mythical method applies to the play at all, as most critics think it does, he must have used some extant myth (as opposed to theory). Nor will theories about the culture out of which such a myth might come be of much value in understanding how Eliot has used that myth to interpret the present.

An important step in the scholarly work done on Sweeney Agonistes was taken by Michael O'Brien in his discovery of the source of the myth which Eliot used in the play.²⁰ What could be more obvious, given the Irish background of the name, Sweeney, than that Eliot should have used an Irish legend as his instrument of interpretation? The Sweeney Clan comes up many times in Irish legendry and therefore offers a wide range of myths from which Eliot may have chosen one or several for his purposes. O'Brien has suggested one possible legend of the Clan

which fits certain aspects of Eliot's play:

The mythical figure whom Eliot did use in his 'parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity' was Suibhne the Mad whose story J.G. O'Keeffe translated from the Gaelic for the Irish Text Society in 1913. The title of the Middle-Irish romance was Buile Suibhne [The Frenzy of Suibhne]. It tells the story of a mad Irish king who lives among the birds. The correspondence between the titles Sweeney Agonistes and The Frenzy of Suibhne and between his fate and that of 'Sweeney Among the Nightingales' is obvious;²¹

After a short discussion of Eliot's Sweeney poems O'Brien has outlined the relationship between Sweeney and his ancestor:

Suibhne is quite literally the Fisher King. At one point he describes himself rather poignantly as

fishing in springtime
the meandering Shannon
Often do I reach
the land I have set in order

These lines inevitably recall The Waste Land:

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?

Suibhne comes under a curse because of his attack on the Church of Christ. He attacks the Church in the person of its priest, Saint Ronan, and its book, the Psalter, which he casts away, and its people one of whom he murders. Saint Ronan then curses him to live on the natural plane among the birds where he will live as any bird. Later his suffering is described as the inevitable result of a whole people rejecting the word of God from his Saints. This war against the word results in a barren life among the birds just as Eliot's waste land is the result of the secularization of civilization. The curse comes into effect during a great battle when horrible sounds of combat drive Suibhne from his companions to exile among the birds. O'Keeffe notes that this battle was of great historical importance in Irish history as was World War I to which Sweeney Agonistes is clearly linked. It was the sound which drove Sweeney to his 'birds' - Mrs. Porter and the rest. Suibhne then learns of the horror of life lived on the strictly natural plane. He is described as neither living nor dead and several times talks of himself as dead. He is pursued by horrible figures so reminiscent of Orestes' Furies that O'Keeffe conjectures the poet must have been familiar with Orestes' story. He experiences the horrible sense of isolation and fear which Sweeney suffers. Like Sweeney, he 'does a girl in.' She dies in the sea like Harry's wife rather than in a bath like Sweeney's girl. But Sweeney's mentioning of lysol

points up rather crudely but clearly the possible cleansing effects of the murder. Suibhne is then afraid of the consequences and says so in words which suggest Sweeney's situation:

for I am the most discontented and unhappy
creature in the world, for neither rest nor
slumber comes on my eyes for fear of my being
slain.

The curse Suibhne is under eventually works out to his spiritual benefit. He finds an advisor, much as Harry finds Agatha, who helps him develop his spiritual insight and though he is murdered as a result of a sordid little plot he is assured of divine union before his death. The circumstances of his murder suggest the 'plot' of 'Sweeney Among the Nightingales' where the Sacred Heart, Agamemnon, death and dung, are brought together in a very similar fashion. The raven which lurks so ominously in 'Sweeney Among the Nightingales' is used for similar effect in the Gaelic tale when Suibhne's suffering is prophesied.²²

Although O'Brien errs when he attributes to Sweeney (rather than to a man whom Sweeney once knew) a 'sense of isolation and fear' as well as the murder of a girl, O'Brien seems to be very close to a valid understanding of Sweeney Agonistes when he implies that Eliot may have used the Irish legend to interpret "the secularization of civilization". Nevertheless, the Buile Suibhne does not account for the two major themes of the play, the themes of the island paradise and of its inevitable by-product, boredom. These are themes which can in no way be accounted for by the somewhat misleading Orestian epigraph (Sweeney like Orestes can see things which the other characters cannot, but he at no time sees the Furies or anything like the Furies). A further examination of the Sweeney legends in Irish folklore does however reveal a myth which Eliot could well have used to interpret the escape and boredom of twentieth-century culture.

The "Craobhsgaoileadh Chlainne Suibhne: The Ramifications of the Clan Suibhne", in Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne: an Account of the

MacSweeney Families In Ireland, with Pedigrees, tells of one Murchadh Mear who established the Sweeney clan in Ireland and then, to avoid boredom, set out on a journey for the "Fortunate Island":

Some time after Murchadh Mear had made that conquest, his wildness and enthusiasm drove him to think of going in search of the Fortunate Island, for he had heard some account of its wonders. He set out in quest . . . with one ship's crew to search for the Fortunate Island, and on that expedition there befell him many terrible and strange things. One day as they were traversing the sea they came upon a sandbank in mid-ocean. They landed there, and kindling a fire on the sandbank, they were partaking by the fire's side of whatever they had collected thereon. And Murchadh, having got up to explore the place, beheld the eyes of a monster and the semblance of his entire head. And when he came to where his people were, he ordered them into their ship, not telling them what he had seen till they had gone a long distance away from the sandbank. Then they observed the sandbank submerging in the sea, and their ship was almost engulfed by the huge disturbance it set upon the water as it went down. And they say that that which was there was one half of the ocean swollen to excessive size.

From there they proceeded till they came near the Fortunate Island, and they observed many strange, immense monsters in the place, and huge, indescribable flocks of sheep. There was one great flock which was bigger than all the rest. As they came close to the island, all the sheep came near to look at them, and took their position on an immense cliff which was over the spot where the ship lay. And one of the sheep, a great, big, fine ram, jumped with a swift, violent bound, and alighted in the middle of the ship. The men who were with Murchadh caught him, and it was a task of difficulty for them all to tie him down. The horn of that ram was on the altar of Gleann Eile 'Glanelly,' and it was able to hold three glasses of wine or water.

In the opposite end of the island they saw a huge beast which they thought was a whale. And another small one of the shape of a little pig they observed pushing the large creature with its snout, and driving it before itself along the strand. Against the advice of his people Murchadh landed on the island, and came to the place where the little animal was. He struck it three times with his sword, but failed to draw blood. And the animal took no heed of him except to look at him when he gave the last blow, and Murchadh never before experienced a marvel, or a trouble, or a difficulty so horrible and so terrifying as the look which the beast gave. Thereupon he left the island, having seen many other strange sights and in the end they returned to Ireland after the long period they spent on that expedition.²³

If it be granted that Pereira, because he pays the rent, and because even the very rhythm of his name dominates the acoustic atmos-

phere of the flat he subsidizes, is the symbol of Secular culture (a culture which Eliot has been observed as treating as if it were a pariah, something he wished to cast out); then Sweeney, with the mythic experiences he has inherited from his forebearers like Murchadh Mear and Suibhne Geilt, is Eliot's interpreter of the space or cultural conditions which Pereira controls. Sweeney, as a person, does not act, he is involved in no moral struggle, but he does recognize, like Murchadh Mear, that the island is a fraud, that an escape from boredom cannot be had through wild adventures, and that there are in life inexplicable conundrums like the indestructible piggish creature, or the confusion of life and death. It is Sweeney's contact with his ancient past, his awareness of his origins which makes him the interpreter:

SWEENEY

I've been born, and once is enough.
 You don't remember, but I remember,
 Once is enough.

[193 - 195]

Because Sweeney can translate the past into the present so that the present can see itself better, he can counter the cultural disintegration of the various social "stratifications" of the modern city.²⁴ Sweeney's memory allows him to cut across and therefore revitalize the entire spectrum of those stratifications. The "material, literal-minded and visionless" mentality of Secular man is given, if in prototype only, the semblances of hope:

I once designed, and drafted a couple of scenes, of a verse play. My intention was to have one character whose sensibility and intelligence

should be on the plane of the most sensitive and intelligent members of the audience; his speeches should be addressed to them as much as to the other personages in the play - or rather, should be addressed to the latter, who were to be material, literal-minded and visionless, with the consciousness of being overheard by the former. There was to be an understanding between this protagonist and a small number of the audience, while the rest of the audience would share the responses of the other characters in the play. Perhaps this is all too deliberate, but one must experiment as one can.²⁵

The myth which Sweeney manifests or embodies is life on the Fortunate or crocodile isle. Life there is the discovery of the horror of boredom, the endless repetition of birth, copulation, and death. This repetition is as insistent as the pig-like creature which Murchadh Mear cannot destroy. Sweeney's contact with his origins, his recognition that one birth is enough, and that the repetitions which create boredom are unnecessary, make him a singular figure in the twentieth century. His ability to relate to the various levels of social stratification and make them aware of the ultimate boredom inherent in their dreams of escape, is similar to the way in which certain major organizations provide an antidote to boredom in the twentieth century:

The great merit of Communism is the same as one merit of the Catholic Church, that there is something in it which minds on every level can grasp. Marx may not be intelligible but Communism is. Communism has what is now called a 'myth'. It interferes with people's private lives, and therefore excites men as sensible economists never excite the inhabitants of Poplar and Hoxton. It interferes just as much by giving people licence in ways which they had been brought up not to expect, or else by telling them that the way in which they instinctively behave is the right way, as by restraining them in ways in which they are not accustomed to be restrained. People like licence, and they like restraint. They like surprise. The one thing they do not like is boredom. And Communism is successful so long as it gives people the illusion that they are not bored; so long as it can give them the illusion that they are important. For it has been shown again and again in history that people can put up with the absence of all the things the economists tell us they most need, with every rigour, every torment, so long as they are not bored.²⁶

Sweeney, like Communism, presents something that "minds on every

level can grasp". He appreciates movies in which there are cannibals and missionaries, he appreciates cooking, a good murder story, songs, and booze. He appreciates the reality that cannibals are more likely to convert than be converted, that primitivist life is boring rather than exciting, and that there is no "joint" between life and death. Sweeney understands the philosophical significance of these realities which contradict appearance. Like Orestes in the first epigraph to the play Sweeney can say "You don't see the, you don't - but I see them". But, unlike Orestes, Sweeney is not scared by these realities. Sweeney does not say with Orestes, "they are hunting me down, I must move on" as perhaps some of the other characters, the women in particular, might say.

From his privileged position Sweeney makes the other characters aware of boredom by his cannibal action of stripping them in imagination of their Secular environment - the distractions like the telephone, the gramophone and the motor car. In cutting them off from the objects with which their will-o'-the-wisp minds are filled Sweeney is performing in accordance with John of the Cross's conclusion which makes up the play's second epigraph:

Hence the soul cannot be possessed of the divine union until it has divested itself of the love of created beings.

There is, however, no real detachment in the play. None of the characters, including Sweeney, rise to the level of action. This inability to will leaves the characters at a sub-human level. The knocking at the end of the play suggests that soon these characters must face the results of inaction.

The formalized laughter and knocking not only provide a symphonic resolution to the structural rhythm, but raise that rhythm to objective consciousness. The knocking as it were brings out the emotional significance of the mystery surrounding Pereira and the living death of boredom. The moment after the last knock provides the catharsis of the play. Action, and therefore moral struggle are imminent. This use of language to tie together in one concrete, specific word all the forces of the play provides a final illustration of exactly what Eliot was after in poetic drama:

This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry. Nevertheless, I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama, which would be a design of human action and of words, such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order.²⁸

It is interesting that, for all the thinking about poetic drama which Eliot did from a time early in his career up to the publication of his first full length play in 1935, the only actual attempts at poetic drama during that period were Sweeney Agonistes, published in 1932 (though possibly written several years earlier), and The Rock published in 1934. Though Eliot gave no explanation for this strange hiatus in his work, he did indicate that the writing of The Rock came at a time when his purely poetic inspiration was at an apparent end:

Twenty years ago I was commissioned to write a pageant play to be called The Rock. The invitation to write the words for this spectacle - the occasion of which was an appeal for funds for church-building in new housing areas - came at a moment when I seemed to myself to have exhausted my meagre poetic gifts, and to have nothing more to say.²⁹

As well, each of his plays came at a time when he was not writing a poem

of any major significance. Perhaps the two operations were mutually exclusive. Perhaps also, his interest in writing a dramatic poetry finally left him with no alternative but to use the stage. Certainly, if he wanted to create a poetry of human action, of thinking and willing, the more descriptive forms of regular poetry would have seemed inadequate to him. If Sweeney Agonistes can be seen as an exploration of thinking, or of various levels of individual awareness, and The Rock as an exploration of communal awareness, then the two plays together would seem to be a preparation for the communal and individual action which takes place in Eliot's first full length drama, Murder in the Cathedral. It would seem, consequently, advantageous to consider The Rock primarily from the communal point of view, especially since Eliot accepted the credit of personal creation only for the choruses.³⁰

Since The Rock: a Pageant Play Written for Performance at Sadler's Wells Theatre 28 May - 9 June on Behalf of The Forty-five Churches Fund of The Diocese of London was written on request, at a low period in Eliot's life, and only partially designed by Eliot himself, it may well be that Eliot found a certain freedom for experimentation which his usually strict working attitudes would not allow. At any rate the agreement between himself and E. Martin Browne to base the scenario "on the structure of the type of revue then current under the aegis of Charles Cochran" played directly into Eliot's hands.³¹ Eliot could very subtly satirize the Cochran style of revue, for The Rock was to be staged with the utmost propriety:

. . . instead of the Young Ladies relying on their physical charms, they

(together with their male counterparts) wore half-masks and garments of stiff hessian and relied on the application of their vocal agility to Mr. Eliot's verse. . . .

It would be wrong to say that Eliot was at any time deliberately satirizing the revue form. The satire lay in the situation itself. Eliot had preferred the vitality of the music-hall to the mindlessness of the revue, and now he could transform the revue into something meaningful:

In the music-hall comedians they [the lower classes] find the expression and dignity of their own lives; and this is not found in the most elaborate and expensive revue. In England, at any rate, the revue expresses almost nothing.

The use of a chorus line in production simply allowed Eliot to take the depersonalizing chorus line of the revue and explore that very depersonalization as symbolic of a more general but very similar personal condition in society as a whole:

. . . the speakers were impersonal beings whose only function was to make those comments which the author had set down for them. . . . The action of the work was not in the hands of the Chorus. . . .

As a result of this suppression of the personal, when the Chorus speaks "as the voice of the Church of God" it speaks as a Church Secularized in the modern world, as cut off from its past.³⁵ Like all residents of the modern city, it lives primarily in the aggregate:

The endless cycle of idea and action,
Endless invention, endless experiment,
Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;
Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.
All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
 The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
 Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.³⁶

The action of the play centres ostensibly around the building of a humble little church by a few bricklayers, one of whom, Ethelbert, is self-educated and quite devout.³⁷ Ethelbert is the paragon of the simple, but strong, and reasonably individualistic Christian. He is not taken in by the hysterias of fear or of economic revolution, although he does have a weakness for Social Credit. As the building progresses, or is held up by structural difficulties and the vandalism of fanatics, Ethelbert keeps a level head and somehow, simply by his presence, makes acceptable the various interventions of times past - especially those associated with the building of Churches in London.³⁸ In the end Ethelbert brings a sense of satisfaction to the completion of the Church with a song that emphasizes the importance of churches, and of the Church, to individuals like himself:

When I was a lad what 'ad almost no sense
 Then a gentle flirtation was all my delight;
 And I'd often go seekin' for ex-pe-ri-ence
 Along the New Cut of a Saturday night.
 It was on a May evenin' I'll never forget
 That I found the reward of my diligent search;
 And I made a decision I never regret,
 Which led to a weddin' at Trinity Church.³⁹

The Saxon name, Ethelbert, and the various visitations of the past, seem to be used to emphasize the similarity of the plight of the Church in the present, to the same plight in the past. The aim of this continuity seems, in turn, to be to counteract the modern state of mind which tends to feel cut off from the past. Ethelbert puts the modern mind in its place with a very simple but direct statement:

"Fred, I'm afraid you've got that disease they call the modern mind. Which is as much as to say, you'll take no end of trouble to explain away what any man in 'is senses would just believe and take for granted."40

The unity of the basic plot of the play is broken up by the various interventions of the Chorus, who, by their witnessing of events, are purged of their modernistic disease, and realize their condition of individuality:

There is no help in parties, none in interests,
There is no help in those whose souls are choked
and swaddled
In the old winding sheets of place and power
Or the new winding sheets of mass-made thought.
O world! forget your glories and your quarrels,
Forget your groups and your misplaced ambitions,
We speak to you as individual men;
As individuals alone with God.
Alone with God, you first learn brotherhood with men.⁴¹

Their sense of individuality teaches them brotherhood, but not just brotherhood with the present. The brotherhood of the Chorus takes them outside the present and allows them to see the deeper pattern of the rhythm of their individual lives. This is a configuration neither more nor less important than that of any other time:

In our rhythm of earthly life we tire of light.
We are glad when the day ends, when the play
ends; and ecstasy is too much pain.
We are children quickly tired: children who are
up in the night and fall asleep as the
rocket is fired; and the day is long for work
or play.
We tire of distraction or concentration, we sleep
and are glad to sleep.
Controlled by the rhythm of blood and the day and
the night and the seasons.
And we must extinguish the candle, put out the
light and relight it;
Forever must quench, forever relight the flame.
Therefore we thank Thee for our little light,
that is dappled with shadow.⁴²

The Chorus tends to break up the sequence of the play, rather than to unite the various unrelated acts as does the chorus line of a real revue. This fragmentary form allows for moments of reflection, rather than for the continuous seduction of the senses by the Chorus's more commercial prototypes. It is in these moments of reflection or audible silences that the audience is allowed to see the Church as a body of people rebuilding itself, and re-defining itself in the face of worldly experience. This re-defining is particular and concrete, like the Church building itself, and depends for that concreteness on definite events in time and space. The insistence on a specific history could not be over-emphasized where Eliot was concerned:

The great majority of English speaking people, or at least the vast majority of persons of British descent; half of France, half of Germany, the whole of Scandinavia, are outside of the Roman communion: that is to say, the Roman Church has lost some organic parts of the body of modern civilisation. It is a recognition of this fact which makes some persons of British extraction hesitate to embrace the Roman communion; and which makes them feel that those of their race who have embraced it have done so only by the surrender of some essential part of their inheritance and by cutting themselves off from their family.⁴³

To involve the Chorus in the history of the Church Eliot wrote one scene in which the Chorus functions as actor rather than as spectator. This scene closes "Part One", and opens "Part Two".

The Chorus's one special scene proceeds from the general to the particular, as its members look for a re-definition of themselves. At first, in true modern fashion, the Chorus reacts en masse or in generalities, as, confronted with persecution, it begins to doubt the efficacy of the Church:

But come, let us not lose hope in the world, prematurely;
The world is not quite given up to diplomacy,
Combinations and finding of formulas
There are always the young, the devoted,
The enthusiasts, breakers of fetters.
And some such I now see approaching
With aloft their gay banner of sunrise.⁴⁴

The enthusiasts turn out to be a group of "Redshirts" who speak "in unison, with military gestures", and whose song is both an epitome of mass-made thought and a delicate satire of a revue:

Our verse
is free
as the wind on the steppes
as love in the heart of the factory worker
thousands and thousands of steppes
millions and millions of workers
all working
all loving
in the cities
on the steppes
production has risen by twenty point six per cent
we can laugh at God!
our workers
all working
our turbines
all turning
our sparrows
all chirping
all denounce you, deceivers of the people!⁴⁵

As the Chorus realizes there is no salvation in the apparent liberalism of the regimented communists, they are confronted with an alternative regiment of "Blackshirts" who sing a hymn of pseudo-humanism dressed in the trappings of religion. The Nazis, however, offer nothing definite except an hysteria of anti-Semitism.

From the generalities of the mass, the Chorus turns to the generalities of a particular type, the Plutocrat. The Plutocrat, no doubt, would wind up among the vaporous types condemned by Pound to

hell.⁴⁶ The Plutocrat offers his own kind of generality: "It looks like Gold, but its real name is Power" (and its symbol is the Golden Calf).⁴⁷

"Part One" is ended by a speech from the Rock himself who remarks that man has always faced a choice between Church and world, heaven and hell. As "Part Two" opens, the Chorus is confronted, not with a mass, or a particular type but with emptiness:

Waste and void. Waste and void. And darkness on
the face of the deep.
Has the Church failed mankind, or has mankind
failed the Church?
When the Church is no longer regarded, not even
opposed, and men have forgotten
All gods, except Usury, Lust and Power.⁴⁸

At this point the Chorus ceases to be a group. The Chorus Leader steps out in a man-to-man conversation with the Rock. The Rock assures the Leader that his plight is no worse than the difficulties of London Christians of the past, and then provides the example of Bishop Bloomfield. Bloomfield built two hundred churches under as great a set of difficulties and oppositions as any that are presented by the present. Bloomfield in turn gives the Chorus Leader the example of the Crusades under Richard the Lion-hearted as being England's greatest gesture in the building of the Church. The Chorus then accepts the challenge of the Cross.

Eliot presents Christianity as the only answer to the destructive effects of the mass-made thought of Secularism. It is only the Church that is able to maintain the conditions under which the moral struggle, the exercise of the individual will, can continue:

. . . the difficult discipline is the discipline and training of emotion; this the modern world has great need of; so great need that it hardly understands what the word means; and this I have found is only attainable through dogmatic religion.⁴⁹

Discipline means structure, and structure is based on some pattern.

The fact that Eliot was not happy with The Rock may well have been due to the fact that it did not provide a definite structure for the Church in the modern world. This very thought plagues the Orestian Church builder, Wren, who has his own Furies:

The designs which haunt my imagination, when I think of what might be done - in this city which Providence has thought fit to visit with fire, and thus prepare for the builder - of what might be done, I say: to build here by Thame's side the most beautiful city of all Europe, excelling Vicenza or Rome itself; these inventions in my mind, I say, which may never come to birth, threaten to devour the womb that nourishes them. 'Tis so with all human imaginings. The city of my phantasy will not be made real upon earth, gentlemen. Squalor and filth, and houses expressive of the desolate lives of their inhabitants - these will survive me; and believe me, gentlemen, architectural monsters will raise their horrid heads long after we are gone. Yes, posterity will erect buildings representative of every architectural heresy, embodying every hideous dream that violates the laws of my art. Against thoughts like these, Mr. Evelyn, which dog me like the Furies, I find that a glass of wine and a little gossip and scandal-bearing among friends is a sovereign corrective.⁵⁰

The freedom for experiment which Eliot was given by The Rock was a freedom to fail. His explorations into the mass mind, and his search for a principle of individuality, did not allow him to establish the unity of rhythm, ritual and myth which he accomplished in Sweeney Agonistes. Had that unity been possible, it would have suggested to him a new pattern for the Church, both as building and as people, a pattern which he seems finally to have created in Murder in the Cathedral.

That the Church like the city is both building and people provides a clue in the mystery of the Murder in the Cathedral. As the people

change so does their style of building. As new experience crowds the old into the background, so new architecture dominates. But the maintenance of the old architecture, and the customs associated with it, prevents the old experience of the people from being completely submerged. This endurance is the main lesson of The Rock, but it is also a key to understanding the relationship between Eliot's art and his social theory:

. . . with regard to the preservation of buildings of 'historic interest'. They are not worth preserving because they are 'interesting'. They are worth preserving because they give a conscious reminder of the traditions of a people; and by traditions I do not mean its vain glories, its conceit of itself in its past; but the fact that it has grown in one way and not in another, and that its future growth is determined in certain directions, if any, by its having grown in that way through the past: by the things which are a cause of regret and shame as well as those which may be a cause for pride. And they are still more worth preserving because of their unconscious effect upon those who live among them. But an accumulation of old buildings, however beautiful, means death unless we can also make beautiful new buildings. Old buildings are dead in so far as we put them to a different use than that for which they were intended. If Christianity disappeared, it would be more sensible to destroy all the churches in England than to preserve them as monuments.⁵¹

If a building can die so can a people, for it is the people who give the building its life. The life of the people is in turn reflected in the growth of its architecture.⁵² Eliot's murdering of Becket in Canterbury Cathedral in June, 1935, was a murdering of the contemporary Church in England, and also a witnessing of the continuing miracle of the Resurrection. 'These conclusions would seem to be the tenor of the final choral speech of Murder in the Cathedral:

For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr
has given his blood for the blood of Christ,
There is holy ground, and the sanctity shall not
depart from it

Though armies trample over it, though sightseers
come with guide-books looking over it;
 From where the western seas gnaw at the coast of Iona,
 To the death in the desert, the prayer in forgotten
 places by the broken imperial column,
 From such ground springs that which forever renews
 the earth
 Though it is forever denied. Therefore, O God, we
 thank Thee
 Who hast given such blessing to Canterbury.

[II, 630 - 637; italics mine]

That Eliot had the modern Church, the modern soldier, and the modern tourist in mind when this play was written, there can be little doubt. Consequently, simply to see a Christian allegory as the deeper level of the play is to fall into the murderer's cunning trap. The Christian allegory is relevant, but it is the superficial, attention-getting device designed for a specifically Christian audience. Eliot emphasized the importance of maintaining the audience's attention in his famous five-point letter to Pound:

1. You got to keep the audience's attention all the time.
2. If you lose it you got to get it back QUICK.
3. Everything about plot and character and all else what Aristotle and others say is secondary to the forgoin.
4. But IF you keep the bloody audience's attention engaged, then you can perform any monkey tricks you like when they ain't looking, and its what you do behind the audience's back so to speak that makes your play IMMORTAL for a while. If the audience gets its strip tease it will swallow the poetry.
5. If you write a play in verse, then the verse ought to be a medium to look THROUGH and not a pretty decoration to look AT.⁵³

The Christian allegory in Murder in the Cathedral is the strip tease behind which Eliot tried to work out a poetry, a contemporary discipline and structure, for the Church.

Although Carol Smith does not seem to have followed it up in her own description of Murder she has mentioned the real contemporary focus of the play:

[Eliot's] recent comment that he wrote Murder in the Cathedral as anti-Nazi propaganda points up the often-forgotten motive felt by many in High Church circles during the nineteen-thirties - the desire to save the Christian world from the attacks of rival secular ideologies. Murder in the Cathedral presents the conflict with which most of his writing of the nineteen-thirties dealt: the conflict between the secular world and the world of the spirit.⁵⁴

That the play is a piece of anti-Nazi, anti-secular, anti-mass mind propaganda, cannot be stressed enough, as George Hollering discovered when he set about making the work into a film:

I found it difficult to express in filmic terms the speeches of the Knights after the murder, and explained to Mr. Eliot that, in my opinion, the whole atmosphere of this part of the film would suffer if the Knights suddenly started to address the audience at length at this point. . . . [Eliot] said that this scene was his main reason for writing the play, and that the only way he could see to get his point across was for the Knights to address the audience directly.⁵⁵

The speeches of the Knights are, of course, directed entirely at the modern audience, and implicate that audience totally in the murder-action of the play: "We have been instrumental in bringing about the state of affairs that you approve. We have served your interests; we merit your applause; and if there is any guilt whatever in the matter, you must share it with us" [II, 530 - 534]. Hitler could not have said it better. The same lines rewritten for the film bring out more clearly the mass-appeal techniques used by the pre-World War Two dictatorships:

FIRST KNIGHT

If you have now arrived at a just subordination of the pretensions of the Church to the welfare of the State, remember that it is we who took the first step. You accept our principles; you benefit by our precedent; you enjoy the fruits of our action. Yet we have been dead for nearly 800 years and you still call us murderers. In a

moment you will see the Archbishop laid before the altar and acclaimed as a martyr. Then ask yourselves, who is more representative of the thing you are: the man you call a martyr, or the men you call his murderers?⁵⁶

The structure for the modern Church which is Murder in the Cathedral, and the discipline which the play evolves for the modern Christian, are a structure and a discipline which use the past not as a foundation but as an instrument of interpretation. Just as Sweeney's contact with his origins allows him to understand in mythic form the modern Secular mind, so the Church's contact with Her past as set out in The Rock and Murder in the Cathedral allows the Church to understand Her present situation.

In his "Introduction" to his mother's dramatic poem, Savonarola, Eliot outlined just how the past reveals the present in works which are apparently historical in content. In the first place, "Every period of history is seen differently by every other period; the past is in perpetual flux, although only the past can be known. How usefully, therefore, may we supplement our direct knowledge of a period by contrasting its view of a third, more remote period with our own views of this third period! In this way a work of historical fiction is much more a document on its own time than on the time portrayed".⁵⁷ Eliot has, as it were, in his own historical verse drama, set down a document of the Church's situation in the 1930's for future generations to examine in the light of their attitude towards Thomas Becket and Henry II. The Chorus of Murder in the Cathedral would, for instance, appear almost totally as a twentieth-century phenomenon, because, of all the elements

in the play, it has the least foundation in history. The Chorus indeed sees only the Secularism of the present woven around a few facts of the past:

God gave us always some reason, some hope; but now a new
 terror has soiled us, which none can avert, none can
 avoid, flowing under our feet and over the sky;
 Under doors and down chimneys, flowing in at the ear and
 the mouth and the eye.
 God is leaving us, God is leaving us, more pang, more pain
 than birth or death.

[I, 653 - 655]

In the second place, Eliot recognized that "An historical work not only tells more - or what it tells is more authentic - about the age in which it is written than about the past; it may even tell us more about the future - when that future is also past. We can learn more from Scott about the Young England movement, and even about the Oxford movement, than we can learn from him about the Crusades".⁵⁸ The Third Priest illustrates this point in his projection of the future of the four Knights as he sees them dispersed into hiding like the helpless leaders of a defeated nation after a bitter war:

Go, weak sad men, lost erring souls, homeless in
 earth or heaven.
 Go where the sunset reddens the last grey rock
 Of Brittany, or the Gates of Hercules.
 Go venture shipwreck on the sullen coasts
 Where blackamoors make captive Christian men;
 Go to the northern seas confined with ice
 Where the dead breath makes numb the hand, makes
 dull the brain;
 Find an oasis in the desert sun,
 Go seek alliance with the heathen Saracen,
 To share his filthy rites, and try to snatch
 Forgetfulness in his libidinous courts,
 Oblivion in the fountain by the date-tree;
 Or sit and bite your nails in Aquitaine.
 In the small circle of pain within the skull

You still shall tramp and tread one endless round
 Of thought, to justify your action to yourselves,
 Weaving a fiction which unravels as you weave,
 Pacing forever in the hell of make-believe
 Which never is belief: this is your fate on earth
 And we must think no further of you.

[II, 593 - 612]

And finally, an historical work is not only a record of the situation of its own time, and that situation's possible future, but also, of the state of mind of its own time:

It has sometimes been remarked that the heroes of Shakespeare and Corneille are simply courtiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whatever the period in which they are set. But they are therefore more vital and accordingly truer to the life of any and every time than, for instance, the figures of Sienciewitz - anatomies of Roman archaeology seen through Polish spectacles. Whatever documentary value pertains to the following series of scenes of the life of Savonarola is due to its rendering of a state of mind contemporary with the author (and such rendering is always shown by the choice of subject as well as by the treatment). The same is true of Mr. Bernard Shaw's St. Joan. This Savonarola is a disciple of Schleiermacher, Emerson, Channing and Herbert Spencer; this St. Joan is a disciple of Nietzsche, Butler and every chaotic and immature intellectual enthusiasm of the later nineteenth century. Savonarola has escaped from the cloister to the parsonage; St. Joan has escaped from the parsonage to a studio in Chelsea, and pretends to be one of the People. Savonarola is a contributor to the Hibbert Journal; Joan is a Life-Forcer déclassée. In both is perceptible a certain opposition to ecclesiasticism; the author of Savonarola opposes it directly by exhibiting the beauty of a character which was certainly above fanaticism, and which was not without moral grandeur, in conflict with the hierarchy of its place and time. Mr. Shaw opposes the Church by the more insidious method of defending it, and thereby creating an illusion of tolerance and broadmindedness which will deceive many, no doubt, but will not deceive the Muse of History.⁵⁹

The state of mind which Eliot seems to be working with in Murder in the Cathedral is one which has run out of its Chelsea flat in desperation at the apprehended approach of a formation of German bombers. It is the hysteria of the mass mind, the mind previously collected for the wholesale dissemination of gadgets and doctrines, which is now reacting in

concert as it finds out what it has really purchased:

CHORUS

. . .
 We have all had our private terrors,
 Our particular shadows, our secret fears.
 But now a great fear is upon us, a fear not of one but of many,
 A fear like birth and death, when we see birth and death alone
 In a void apart.
 Are afraid in a fear which we cannot know, which we cannot
 face, which none understands,
 And our hearts are torn from us, our brains unskinned like
 the layers of an onion, ourselves are lost lost
 In a final fear which none understands. O Thomas Archbishop,
 O Thomas our Lord, leave us and leave us be, in our humble
 and tarnished frame of existence, leave us; do not
 ask us
 To stand to the doom on the house, the doom on the Archbishop,
 the doom on the world.

[I, 182 - 191]

The drastic consequences of collective hysteria were a source of great concern to Eliot. The disappearance of even a Secular individualism removed the urban public yet further from the healthy influences of Christianity. The modern crowd was far more a flock than any gathering of Christians might be:

I am already oppressed, not so much by the theory which reacts violently against 'atomistic individualism', and with which, as a theory, I can feel from a Christian point of view a certain sympathy, as by the 'collectivism' which I see already in existence about me, and which makes a London crowd (the members of which perhaps take pride in the individualism and their love of liberty) the sheep-like suggestible entity that it is.⁶⁰

Eliot used the Martyrdom of Becket to interpret the contemporary situation of the Church as it faced the anonymity of organized Secularism in the form of such people as Hitler; as well, to conjecture the future both of Church and Secularism; and, finally, to define the effects of Secularism on the common mind of the twentieth century.

That Eliot, as E. Martin Browne suggested, used a "formal Greek pattern" to control or organize the ritual sequences of the play would seem to be true.⁶¹ Yet it is not a pattern derived specifically from either a Greek comedy or a Greek tragedy. Such a comedy would never allow the death of the main character in such a tragic manner, nor is it likely that a tragedy would allow such a death to be shown on stage. The play is of course neither a tragedy nor a comedy, as Becket himself makes clear in the "Interlude" or "Sermon":

. . . whenever Mass is said, we re-enact the Passion and Death of Our Lord; and on this Christmas Day we do this in celebration of His Birth. So at the same moment we rejoice in His coming for the salvation of men, and offer again to God His Body and Blood in sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world Beloved, as the World sees, this is to behave in a strange fashion. For who in the World will both mourn and rejoice at once and for the same reason?

[4 - 10, 15 - 18]

And, a few sentences later:

Just as we rejoice and mourn at once, in the Birth and in the Passion of Our Lord; so also, in a smaller figure, we both rejoice and mourn in the death of martyrs. We mourn, for the sins of the world that has martyred them; we rejoice, that another soul is numbered among the Saints in Heaven, for the glory of God and for the salvation of men.

[48 - 54]

The combination of the tragic and the comic in a single action seems to have been the one central perception by which Eliot operated as a dramatist.

Eliot's awareness of the tragic-comic combination is, of course, an affirmation of his agreement with Cornford on the common, primitive source of tragedy and comedy:

If Mr. Cornford's theory is correct - and I believe it has the support of Mr. Gilbert Murray - the original dramatic impulse (such as St. George and the Dragon illustrates) is neither comic nor tragic. The

comic element, or the antecedent of the comic, is perhaps present, together with the tragic, in all savage or primitive art; but comedy and tragedy are late, and perhaps impermanent intellectual abstractions.⁶²

Eliot's perception did not, however, remain simply an archeological one. He felt that that level below the tragic and comic was relevant to every age:

For to those who have experienced the full horror of life, tragedy is still inadequate. Sophocles felt more of it than he could express, when he wrote Oedipus the King; Shakespeare, when he wrote Hamlet; and Shakespeare had the advantage of being able to employ his grave-diggers. In the end horror and laughter may be one - only when horror and laughter have become as horrible and laughable as they can be; and - whatever the conscious intention of the authors - you may laugh or shudder over Oedipus or Hamlet or King Lear - or both at once: then only do you perceive that the aim of the comic and the tragic dramatist is the same: they are equally serious. . . . What Plato perceived has not been noticed by subsequent dramatic critics: the dramatic poet uses the conventions of tragic and comic poetry, so far as these are the conventions of his day; there is potential comedy in Sophocles and potential tragedy in Aristophanes, and otherwise they would not be such good tragedians or comedians as they are. . . . The distinction between the tragic and the comic is an account of the way we try to live; when we get below it, as in King Lear, we have an account of the way in which we do live.⁶³

It would, then, be a mistake to say that Eliot derived the ritual sequence of Murder in the Cathedral simply from the Greek form, just as it would be a mistake to say he derived it from the Mass or the primitive phallic ritual sequence which Cornford pieced together in The Origin of Attic Comedy. Becket's temptations, for instance, find an analogy in Cornford's description of the agon:

In some plays, it is less like a debate than a criminal trial, and less like a trial than a duel, with the two half-Choruses acting as seconds and the Leader as umpire. It is several times preceded by an actual fight with fists or missiles, which is somehow arrested in order that the flushed combatants may have it out with their tongues instead. Though the victory is finally won by argument - a term which must include all the arsenal of invective - the Agon is no mere 'dramatised

debate'; it ends in the crisis and turning-point of the play, reverses the situation of the adversaries, and leads not to an academic resolution, but to all the rest of the action that follows. Above all, it is, as we have said, organically related to the final marriage in which the victor is bridegroom, the triumph of the new God or the new King.⁶⁴

But the same temptations also find a very cogent analogy in Christ's temptations in the desert as Carol Smith has pointed out.⁶⁵ It is probably more accurate to say that the ritual sequence of Murder in the Cathedral derived from Eliot's perception of the close analogy between several Christian and non-Christian elements, and the analogy of these elements to the life of one martyr and to the life of the modern Christian Church. This perception is a-temporal, it applies to any period of history, to any drama, or to the interpretation of any such period or drama. It is a perception which applies almost equally to the Chorus and to Becket, as Becket discovers when he hears his own words spoken by the Fourth Tempter:

You know and do not know, what it is to act or suffer.
 You know and do not know know, that action is suffering,
 And suffering action. Neither does the agent suffer
 Nor the patient act.⁶⁶ But both are fixed
 In an eternal action, an eternal patience
 To which all must consent that it may be willed
 And which all must suffer that they may will it,
 That the pattern may subsist, that the wheel may
 turn and still
 Be forever still.

[I, 591 - 599]

The relativity of one pattern to another provides the discovery of a basic pattern which is outside time. The relativity of one time to another provides a relationship between the temporal and the a-temporal. The end of each pattern is the same; the triumph of the new, the summer, the good, and the punishment of the old, the

winter, the evil:

THOMAS

. . .
 I know that history at all times draws
 The strangest consequence from remotest cause.
 But for every evil, every sacrilege,
 Crime, wrong, oppression and the axe's edge,
 Indifference, exploitation, you, and you,
 And you, must all be punished. So must you.
 I shall no longer act or suffer, to the sword's end.

[I, 699 - 705]

Because Becket chooses not "the sword's end", the temporal or created purpose, but the a-temporal purpose, he chooses he knows not what, for the a-temporal purpose can never be known. He knows only that where there is death it is a punishment for sin.

Becket's choice of the a-temporal, the uncreated unknown is the one human act of the play. It is a physical demonstration of all Eliot's moral theory and commitment; it is his achievement of his first full character, and it is probably the most notable wedding of the poetic and dramatic in modern theatre. Here the poetic gesture is the dramatic performance of an ethical and religious action. At the same time Becket's choice is the choice of a modern mind in a modern situation, whatever be the similarity between the present and the present's understanding of the past.

There can of course be little argument about the fact that with The Hollow Men, Ash Wednesday, Murder in the Cathedral and The Four Quartets Eliot has, among many other things, given a modern significance to medieval rhythm. The rhythms of Gregorian chant, of Dante, of the miracle, mystery and morality plays existed for Eliot, as it were, as the tribal rhythms of European man. Everyman, among the structural models used for Murder in the Cathedral, might even be considered, in

Eliot's terms, as the original English, Christian tribal dance. In developing out of these rhythms the ritual sequence of a modern morality play, and the myth of the exercise of free will, Eliot has made available to the modern Christian sensibility a new vitality.

Like Sweeney Agonistes, Murder in the Cathedral uses rhythm, ritual, and myth to organize and express the central experience of Becket's choice and the Chorus's acceptance. The rhythm ranges between the more mundane rhythmic style of Everyman used to express the simple feelings of the Chorus, and the ritualistic style of Gregorian chant used for the feelings of the more complex characters.⁶⁷ This range of rhythm, in other words, provides the basic acoustic atmosphere out of which are drawn the voice levels or levels of character of the play. Those characters in closer touch with the Gregorian rhythms are more sensitive to their experiences, and are therefore more capable of action or suffering. Indeed, Becket's whole experience in the play might be considered his coming to awareness of, and his subsequent choice of the consequences of the central a-temporal rhythm of the play. The farther from the religious rhythm a character is the more he is involved in the less conscious communal rhythm. In the fashion of tribal warfare the four Knights take the communal rhythm out of consciousness altogether, and into the vulgar extreme of academic prose. The Chorus, however, provides the greatest variety of rhythmic reactions to the stimuli of the play. These reactions range from the calm observations of the rhythms of the seasons, to the ecstasies of the rhythms of thanksgiving in the Te Deum, and find their median in the total hysteria of the Chorus's visceral awareness of the rhythms

of death:

. . . . I have seen
 Rings of light coiling downwards, descending
 To the horror of the ape. Have I not known, not known
 What was coming to be? It was here, in the kitchen,
 in the passage.
 In the mews in the barn in the byre in the market-place
 In our veins our bowels our skulls as well
 As well as in the plottings of potentates
 As well as in the consultations of powers.
 What is woven on the loom of fate
 What is woven in the councils of princes
 Is woven also in our veins, our brains,
 Is woven like a pattern of living worms
 In the guts of the women of Canterbury.

[II, 220 - 232]

Out of the range of rhythms stretching from the earthy rhythms of Everyman to the vaulted resonances of chant Eliot has developed his ritual sequences in counterpoint, balancing the temporal and the a-temporal.⁶⁸ In "Part One", the secular ritual of the Chorus's retreat from involvement - which drives them almost underground, contrasts with the a-temporal ritual of Becket's temptations which drive him to the ethereal reaches of insubstantial power. "Part Two" reverses the sequence by balancing Becket's secular death with the Chorus's spiritual purgation.

Rhythm of course suggests time, as do the concepts of the secular or temporal and a-temporal. But rhythm like dance requires a foundation in space. Just as Sweeney Agonistes is an exfoliation of a particular space, a mid-twenties suburban London flat, through the medium of the name Pereira which acts like a tribal drum, so Murder in the Cathedral creates the particular space of a church, a collection of people with a specific identity and personality.⁶⁹ The very first

gesture of the play is an orientation in space:

CHORUS

Here let us stand, close by the cathedral. Here
 let us wait.
 Are we drawn by danger? Is it the knowledge of
 safety, that draws our feet
 Towards the Cathedral? What danger can be
 For us, the poor, the poor women of Canterbury?
 what tribulation
 With which we are not already familiar? There is no
 danger
 For us, and there is no safety in the cathedral.
 Some presage of an act
 Which our eyes are compelled to witness, has forced
 our feet
 Towards the cathedral. We are forced to bear witness.

[I, 1 - 8]

The Chorus members create the space of the cathedral and act as the container of the drama. They are a de-sacralised cathedral, there is no temporal or spiritual safety or danger for them where they stand. The sacrilege or desecration of their a-temporal life has already taken place. They have no will, no chance to observe freely whatever may happen; they are "forced to bear witness." The values of the world, of the Secular, have murdered their Christian life. The Chorus's lack of will is however also a sign of their salvation; for, as Coghill notes, martyr in its Greek derivation means witness.⁷⁰ And, as Becket says in the "Sermon", a martyrdom "is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr" [67 - 70]. The Chorus, then, are in a condition to be saved, to regain their free will - if someone will accept their martyrdom. Once the desecration of their life - the Secularism in it - has been purged, once the crime has been detected and punished,

then their Secularized cathedral will again become a fit dwelling for the a-temporal:

CHORUS

For wherever a saint has dwelt, wherever a martyr has
 given his blood for the blood of Christ,
 There is holy ground, and the sanctity shall not depart
 from it
 Though armies trample over it, though sightseers come
 with guide-books looking over it;

[II, 630 - 632]

As soon as the space has been established, the rhythms which are to permeate it can be established. The rhythms of Murder in the Cathedral do not, of course, function as self-consciously as do those of the experimental Sweeney Agonistes, but certain parallels can be observed which serve to suggest what Eliot has been up to. If, for instance, the word, Pereira, functions as the tribal drum in Sweeney, time itself does almost the same job in Murder. Just as the resonances of Pereira fill the suburban London flat, so the two great secular feasts of the modern world, Christmas and New Year's, fill the minds of the women of Canterbury, and provoke in them feelings similar to those of Dusty and Doris:

CHORUS

The New Year waits, breathes, waits, whispers in darkness.
 While the labourer kicks off a muddy boot and stretches
 his hand to the fire,
 The New Year waits, destiny waits for the coming.

[I, 11 - 13]

The next passage of the Chorus continues the theme of time. It points out how thoroughly time has permeated the Chorus's space, and how like an evil disease that permeation seems:

Here is no continuing city, here is no abiding stay.⁷¹
 Ill the wind, ill the time, uncertain the profit,
 certain the danger.
 O late late late, late is the time, late too late, and
 rotten the year;

[I, 144 - 146]

The Chorus senses that something is going to happen, an event will take place which will stop time and force them to alter the pseudo-ritualistic, mindless habits of their lives. After Becket's temptations, but before his decision, time becomes such an obsession that it spreads epidemic-like from Chorus to Priests and Tempters and it allows no contemplation, no awareness at all:

CHORUS

There is no rest in the house. There is no rest in the
 street.
 I hear the restless movement of feet. And the air is
 heavy and thick.
 Thick and heavy the sky. And the earth presses up against
 our feet.
 What is the sickly smell, the vapour? the dark green light
 from a cloud on a withered tree? The earth is heaving
 to parturition of issue of hell. What is the sticky
 dew that forms on the back of my hand?

[I, 600 - 603]

As time speeds up it virtually destroys space and forbids sense orientation. The result is an uncontrollable hysteria not unlike delerium tremens:

CHORUS

. . .
 The forms take shape in the dark air:
 Puss-purr of leopard, footfall of padding bear,
 Palm-pat of nodding ape, square hyaena waiting
 For laughter, laughter, laughter. The Lords of Hell are here.
 They curl round you, lie at your feet, swing and wing
 through the dark air.
 O Thomas Archbishop, save us, save us, save yourself
 that we may be saved;
 Destroy yourself and we are destroyed.

[I, 658 - 664]

The three main choral sequences of "Part One", then, develop, out of the rhythmic resonances of the Chorus's awareness of time, a ritual of progressive destruction by time. As the destruction is completed, the time-god reveals itself for what it is. Underneath the empirical, inductive world, abstracted from religious awareness, there lurk the Lords of Hell. All personal identity is lost. The Chorus can neither act nor suffer. The challenge is to conquer time:

Time past and time future
 Allow but a little consciousness.
 To be conscious is not to be in time
 But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
 The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
 The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
 Be remembered; involved with past and future.
 Only through time time is conquered.⁷²

The progressive sequential flow of time must be broken up. It is broken up by the realization that some moments are of more value than others. These moments can be returned to, they allow consciousness, which "is not to be in time". Such moments are the threshold of the a-temporal. In effect, if the progressive time sequences of the Chorus's speeches in "Part One" be considered as the rhythmic working out of a ritual, then the three scenes involving Becket are contrapuntally a reversing of the process, whereby time is stopped and events, or moments, take place. These events tend to strengthen the sense of place, and halt the disintegration of the cathedral. Their prime characteristic is a progressive orientation towards person. They also tend to be moments that find parallels with both the classical and Christian past, as if such parallels give them the quality of moments of consciousness, moments not in time.

The moment of the Messenger finds, of course, its direct parallel in Greek drama where the messenger is all important. The Messenger's first lines stress the sense of place and the sense of orientation towards person. From this point of view it is interesting that the Messenger has the most highly developed personality of any in the play:

Servants of God, and watchers of the temple
I am here to inform you, without circumlocution:
The Archbishop is in England, and is close outside
the city.

[I, 70 - 73]

It is no accident that the Archbishop should be "close outside the city", any more than that the Chorus should, at the beginning of the play, "stand, close by the cathedral". Personal space requires a strong physical orientation.

The Messenger's scene, however, is not just an event in itself. It is also the moment of Becket's arrival abstracted out of time to the level, almost, of sanctification:

MESSENGER

• • •
The streets of the city will be packed to suffocation,
And I think that his horse will be deprived of its tail,
A single hair of which becomes a precious relic.

[I, 91 - 93]

The parallel of the scene with Cornford's description of the phallic procession of Attic ritual⁷³ and with Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem also raises the scene to a higher level of consciousness and places it even more on the threshold of the a-temporal. If one of the purposes of ritual is to make a god present by re-enactment or repetition

of the myth of his divine act, then the Messenger's scene can be considered the ritual invocation of Becket. The Priests' almost choric commentary on Becket's arrival brings the action back into the unconscious or non-descript sequential flow of time:

THIRD PRIEST

For good or ill, let the wheel turn.
 The wheel has been still, these seven years, and no
 good.
 For ill or good, let the wheel turn.
 For who knows the end of good or evil?
 Until the grinders cease
 And the door shall be shut in the street,
 And all the daughters of music shall be brought low.

[I, 137 - 143]

Becket's scene of temptation begins and ends with the ritual formula of salvation, "That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action/ And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still/ Be forever still" [I, 215 - 217]. The repetition of the formula suggests the completion of the wheel, just as on a smaller scale the First Tempter enters and leaves using the same unceremonial ceremony. The use of conscious repetition places the event of temptation solely outside of time. Becket's abstract statement withdraws the action out of the realm of time sequence. The action is abstracted into the timeless boundaries of Becket's maze-like consciousness, as into some inner city.

That Becket's temptations consist of his growing realization that he cannot abstract himself out of time, that "Only through time time is conquered", indicates that his disease is a disease of place. Ultimately he is on the verge of destroying his own personal integrity

and that of his parishoners by exercising too much political will. Becket's temptations, in a ritual way, make not just the physical Becket present, but, by gradually destroying his power, make the personal Becket, the simple man, present. The Archbishopric of Canterbury can "neither act nor suffer/without perdition" [I, 589 - 590], but Thomas Becket, Christian, can. Just as the Chorus must be abstracted out of the domination of the indistinguishable sequence of time, into the place of the present, so Becket is reduced from the high place of his chair - the physical cathedral - into the present which has a connection with time. Becket and the Chorus find themselves in the co-ordinates of the same present, the same time and place, the "now" of Becket's third ritual moment:

Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain;
Temptation shall not come in this kind again.

[I, 665 - 666]

The camera has been brought into focus. For the first time in several centuries a really fully developed character is present in the action and suffering of a poetic drama.

The agon-like structure of Becket's temptations, with their quality of debate verging on physical conflict, not only heightens the sense of a moment out of time by its parallels with the agon of classical Greek drama, with Christ's temptations by the devil, and with His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, but it also provides an illustration of Eliot's solution or partial solution to the problem of Secularism, and thereby suggest a structure for the modern Church:

Our occupation with immediate social, political, and economic issues to-day is a necessity, but a regrettable one; for it tends to abbreviate and confuse that period of adolescence in which a man is acquiring understanding by submitting himself, in a leisurely way, to one intellectual influence after another. I know that for some natures the diversity of influences of Paris in those days [1905 - 1911] - a real diversity, not merely a division into political groups - was too strong: But an atmosphere of diverse opinions seems to me on the whole favourable to the maturing of the individual; because when he does come to a conviction, he does so not by 'taking a ticket', but by making up his own mind.

There is something to be said, in these days, for individualism. I do not mean what ordinarily passes by that name, simply a party of folk huddling together to be independent in company. Most 'individualists', I dare say, have never held an opinion contrary to that of the other members of their small immediate society, nor have ever gone into the wilderness for the purpose of making up their minds. A number of eminent Liberals of all three parties have recently signed a manifesto in favour of 'democratic' government. I have considerable sympathy with them, with reference to the recent developments which cause them alarm; but I cannot feel their convictions are fundamental enough to cut much ice; and the juvenile enthusiasm of their opponents may only be heated to a higher degree by such pronouncements.⁷⁴

Becket's temptations stop time to allow for a leisurely interaction of diverse opinions, all of them opinions which have some claim on Becket's mind. They are contemporary opinions though they find correlatives in any period of history.⁷⁵ Their claim on Becket's weakness gives them the quality of various "journalistic corruptions" from among which Becket must sift the truth and make his decision.⁷⁶ The last temptation is the most insidious, for it advertises and plays on the weakness in the opinions Becket has come to, in his sifting of the other temptations.

Each of the first three temptations offers a progressively more vaporous or unreal prize. The first temptation advertises earthly pleasure, and even begs Thomas to rejoin the jet set, much as did the current Duke of Windsor. Nevertheless, the temptation has substance

because it is a re-awakening of the tactile memory which Becket supposedly has learned to control:

BECKET

The impossible is still temptation.
The impossible, the undesirable,
Voices under sleep, waking a dead world,
So that the mind may not be whole in the present.

[I, 319 - 322]

This "dead world" is the "Unreal City" where death has undone so many; or the world of the "patient etherised upon a table" with its "half-deserted streets" where "human voices wake us and we drown".⁷⁷ Here the auditory imagination works on the simplest level, a level of hypnotic or subliminal suggestion. Becket is invited to partake of seductive joys much as Prufrock is tempted perhaps by advertising messages to be a consumer of such latest fashions as "white flannel trousers".⁷⁸ Eliot, in his creation of the First Tempter, may well have had in mind the whole problem of the modern consumer and the use of advertising to sell the over-production of industry. At any rate, the Tempter certainly presents himself as a first-class, door-to-door salesman, and there can be little doubt that his motives have about them something of a commercial aura:

FIRST TEMPTER

Then I leave you to your fate.
I leave you to the pleasures of your higher vices,
Which will have to be paid for at higher prices.

[I, 308 - 310]

Becket's second temptation finds less reality in the world of the senses, but even more reality in the world of twentieth-century power. When the Second Tempter offers the chancellorship he is

promoting the situation which Hitler, one of the "late ones" [I, 329], accepted:

The Chancellor. King and Chancellor.
 King commands. Chancellor richly rules.
 This is a sentence not taught in the schools.
 To set down the great, protect the poor,
 Beneath the throne of God can man do more?
 Disarm the ruffian, strengthen the laws,
 Rule for the good of the better cause,
 Dispensing justice make all even,
 Is thrive on earth, and perhaps in heaven.

[I, 344 - 350]

The centralization of power was, of course, for Eliot, one of the great modern spiritual illnesses. Few other factors had the same tendency to rob the individual of his power to act.⁷⁹

The always inevitable, but never-expected reaction to nationalism and class, as well as to over-centralization, is Becket's third temptation - the temptation to revolution. When the Third Tempter announces his presence with the line, "I am an unexpected visitor" [I, 395], he is, to one who looks on time from the outside, about as unexpected as were the French, American, or Bolshevik revolutions, or even the feminist revolution or recent assertions of student power. By "Ending the tyrannous jurisdiction/ Of king's court over bishop's court,/ Of king's court over baron's court" [I, 447 - 449], the Tempter is supposedly offering a new freedom to the human will. All the dreams of liberal democracy or communism seem possible. But just as Becket cannot reject the legitimate development of power under a king, and the rich cultural interinvolvement of various segments of society, so Eliot could not reject the aristocracy of blood in favour of the aristocracy of money:

Unrestrained industrialism, then, (with its attendant evils of over-production, excessive 'wealth', an irrelevance and lack of relation of production to consumption which it attempts vainly to overcome by the nightmare expedient of 'advertisement'), destroys the upper classes first. You cannot make an aristocrat out of a company chairman, though you can make him a peer; and in a thoroughly industrial society the only artist left will be the international film producer. France, of course, has resisted better than any other country. Provincial French life is dull enough, but not without grace and the beauty of family union; and the population of Paris lives entirely in flats; yet I have hardly known a French intellectual in Paris - with the exception of M. Cocteau the 'Parisian', which perhaps helps to prove the rule - who did not keep up a proud and affectionate contact son pays, be it only a farmhouse in Central France. 'Regionalism' may of course be carried to the point of absurdity.⁸⁰

When the Third Tempter offers himself as "A country-keeping lord who minds his own business", and says "It is we country lords who know the country/ And we who know what the country needs./ It is our country. We care for the country./We are the backbone of the nation" he takes advantage of the truth to "wrap" his "meaning in as dark generality/ As any courtier" [I, 404 - 407, and 420 - 421]. The Tempter here is advocating a revolution that would set up a kind of democracy. The power he seeks is in fact the power which a modern electorate theoretically exercises when it votes. Eliot felt that this decentralization of power had vitiated the British way of life:

The British people has been taught that it should manage its own affairs; but wrongly taught. Every man knows that he should manage his own household; every village knows that it should manage itself. Yet everything has been reversed: instead of managing our own affairs we are given a ticket entitling us to some voice in managing other people's affairs. We are led to believe that a Parliamentary election is the most important occasion on which we may exercise our Right; whereas it should matter much more to us - and we are much more competent to decide - who should manage our own village than who should manage Parliament. We are taught, in every modern nation to worship the nation first, the district second, and the local community third, and the family last; whereas we are only capable of understanding the nation through its relation to the family.

A social system which has no explicit moral foundation, in which

the Church, rather than the brothels, is tolerated, in which ownership of land, except for speculative purposes is not encouraged, may yet have moral consequences and influences upon the individual. A system based on moral presuppositions of which we disapprove may turn the individual into a kind of person whom we dislike, but he will still be a person who feels that he has a reason for existing; the result of a system which has no moral presuppositions may be nothing better than decay.⁸¹

The parallels of Becket's first three temptations with contemporary problems suggest that Becket is pointing to weaknesses in modern living, and, so to speak, doing some thinking for the modern mind. In the fourth temptation he shows the modern mind how to think for itself as he is confronted with his own thoughts. Here the action is purely on the abstract level, as Becket is forced for the first time to look at himself and not just at what he and his thoughts represent:

THOMAS

No!

Who are you, tempting with my own desires?
Others have come, temporal tempters,
With pleasure and power at palpable price.
What do you offer? what do you ask?

TEMPTER

I offer what you desire. I ask
What you have to give. Is it too much
For such a vision of eternal grandeur?

THOMAS

Others offered real goods, worthless
But real. You only offer
Dreams to damnation.

TEMPTER

You have often dreamt them.

[I, 574 - 584]

Becket's foreknowledge of his impending martyrdom, a foreknowledge which seems to satirize the deterministic features of dialectical materialism, is his stumbling block.⁸² He can not see beyond it, nor contemplate the

possibility of its not happening. He has yet to realise that neither the act of his murder nor the fruits of that action - the glory of heaven - will be his own doing. He cannot even choose to put himself in the position of suffering without damning himself. And yet when he says, at the beginning of his temptations,

End will be simple, sudden, God-given.
 Meanwhile the substance of our first act
 Will be shadows, and the strife with shadows.

[I, 250 - 253]

he seems already to have chosen the shadows of glory instead of the substance of whatever the a-temporal has chosen for him.

When Becket is confronted with the Fourth Tempter, the other half of his formal "We", he realises that he has abstracted himself completely out of time, but only in order to control time. His orientation towards place, the chair or cathedral of the a-temporal, has been taken, not for the sake of the a-temporal, but for his own dreams of what the temporal should be. Becket's sin is the same sin that Eliot accused the modern Church of Rome of committing:

Religion without humanism produces the vulgarities and the political compromises of Roman Catholicism⁸³

It is just exactly a political compromise with Rome, over a political quarrel about which English bishop should crown Henry II's son, that is going to occasion Becket's death. The quarrel is not a spiritual one, except in as far as Becket is trying to use the a-temporal to assert and establish enduringly the primacy in England of the See of Canterbury:

THOMAS

Ambition comes behind and unobservable.
Sin grows with doing good. When I imposed the King's law
In England, and waged war with him against Toulouse,
I beat the barons at their own game. I
Could then despise the men who thought me most contemptible,
The raw nobility, whose manners matched their finger-nails.
While I ate out of the King's dish
To become servant of God was never my wish.
Servant of God has chance of greater sin
And sorrow, than the man who serves a king.
For those who serve the greater cause may make the cause
serve them,
Still doing right: and striving with political men
May make that cause political, not by what they do
But by what they are.

[I, 681 - 694]

Becket is not fighting for the "values realised only out of time" in his war with Henry, and yet Becket's position is the same as those who, in 1934, were confronted with the choice of Secular or anti-Secular values, should a Second World War occur.⁸⁴ Becket thinks he believes in the pattern of action and suffering, but he is living according to a time philosophy or value system after all.

The process through which Becket is confronted and disillusioned by his own thoughts provides a paradigm for the way in which clear thought is established.⁸⁵ A person has to be able to look at himself directly. The evil of Secularism as it pervades twentieth-century writing is precisely that it does not allow self-reflection; it is too interested in keeping disbelief suspended, and in keeping the imagination preoccupied. This very problem, ironically, affected the filming of

Murder in the Cathedral:

The film, standing in a different relation to reality from that of the stage, demands rather different treatment of plot. An intricate plot,

intelligible on the stage, might be completely mystifying on the screen. The audience has no time to think back, to establish relations between early hints and subsequent discoveries. The picture passes before the eyes too quickly; and there are no intervals in which to take stock of what has happened, and make conjectures of what is going to happen. The observer is, as I have said, in a more passive state. The film seems to me to be nearer to narrative and to depend much more on the episodic. And, as the observer is in a more passive state of mind than if he were watching a stage play, so he has to have more explained to him. When Mr. Hoellering pointed out to me that the situation at the beginning of the play of 'Murder in the Cathedral' needed some preliminary matter to make it intelligible, I at first supposed that what he had in mind was that a film was aimed at a much larger, and therefore less well informed audience, ignorant of English history, than that which goes to see a stage play. I very soon became aware that it was not a difference between one type of audience and another, but between two different dramatic forms. The additional scenes, to explain the background of events, are essential for any audience, including even those persons already familiar with the play.⁸⁶

Murder in the Cathedral, as stage play, is anti-film because it does stop action, it does allow self-reflection and it even leaves to the audience's imagination what Becket does to get out of the dilemma that the Fourth Tempter has put him in. When Becket sees the illusion in his own thoughts and is thereby disillusioned, he abstracts himself from the world of thought into the a-temporal darkness and also into the present. The state of mind which Becket reaches is the state of mind

Eliot preached for the modern world:

The man who is properly disillusioned is almost unconscious of the fact; and he knows that it is childish to let his mind dwell upon the things he no longer believes in; and that it is adult to believe in something and occupy his mind with that.

.....

Communism, - I mean the ideas of communism, not the reality, which would be of no use in this way - has come as a godsend (so to speak) to those young people who would like to grow up and believe in something. Once they have committed themselves, they must find (if they are honest and really growing) that they have let themselves in for all the troubles that afflict the person who believes in something. I speak of those who are moved by the desire to be possessed by a conviction, rather than by the obvious less laudable motives which make a man believe that he has a belief. They have joined that bitter fraternity which lives on a higher

level of doubt; no longer the doubting which is just play with ideas, on the level of a France or of a Gide but that which is a daily battle. The only end to the battle, if we live to the end, is holiness; the only escape is stupidity, and stupidity, for the majority of people, is no doubt the best solution of the difficulty of thinking; it is far better to be stupid in a faith, even in a stupid faith, than to be stupid and believe nothing. For the smaller number, the first step is to find the least incredible belief and live with it for some time; and that in itself is uncomfortable; but in time we come to perceive that everything else is still more uncomfortable. Everyone, in a sense, believes in something; for every action involving any moral decision implies a belief; but a formulated belief is better, because more conscious, than an unformulated or in formulable one. And, on the other hand, a belief which is merely a formulation of the way in which one acts has no validity; unless it turns and compels action of certain kinds in certain circumstances it has no status. Anatole France had his 'philosophy of life' if you like; but a philosophy of life which involves no sacrifice turns out in the end to be merely an excuse for being the sort of person that one is. I have, in consequence of these reflexions, much sympathy with communists of the type with which I am here concerned; I would even say that, as it is the faith of the day, there are only a small number of people living who have achieved the right not to be communists. My only objection to it is the same as my objection to the cult of the golden calf. It is better to worship a Golden Calf than to worship nothing; but that, after all, is not, in the circumstances, an adequate excuse. My objection is that it just happens to be mistaken.⁸⁷

The agon, or sequence of temptation rituals, presents, by means of an a-temporal rhythm, a mind capable of coping with death and with the problems of a time-oriented world set on escaping death. Becket's temptations are witnessed by Priests, Chorus, and Tempters alike, as though they were some mass radio or television audience. The fact that Becket is confronted by his own image of himself in the thoughts presented by the Fourth Tempter becomes proof positive that he is something more than simply that image, that he is not self-made. A man is always something more than what he hears or sees of himself in ritual, art, or in the mass media. Disillusionment is withdrawal. As Thomas Becket withdraws from his self-made self - his image - he comes to realize that

he is the creature of some other hand, a creature like all other men, past, present and future, subject to death, the punishment for sin [I, 701 - 705].

Once Becket is free of illusion he is free to act. In the one truly a-temporal moment of the play he exercises his will by accepting the condition which he has in common with all men.⁸⁸ While the third secular or time ritual of the Chorus progresses rapidly toward death, it also acts as a mirror, but not as a man-made mirror, in which Becket can see his true, non-image, self. As Becket looks into the eternal present which that mirror is, he can say, "Now is my way clear, now is the meaning plain" [I, 665].

The third or "now" moment which Becket experiences is that key moment of all ritual, the presence of the god, which, in this case, is the god of personal integrity. Becket's princely "we" has become the personal "I". Becket is now free from distractions and can perceive the rhythm of his life:

The natural vigour in the venial sin
Is the way in which our lives begin,. . . .

[I, 669-670]

As well, he can perceive the rhythm of the self-reflection which he has just experienced. The rhymed couplets of the first eight lines of his "now" speech emphasize his co-operation with or response to that rhythm. Both in form and subject-matter the "now" speech resolves the counterpoint of the preceding secular, or time rituals of the Chorus and Becket's own a-temporal rituals. It is the same contrapuntal reconciliation of opposites as that which occurs in "Burnt Norton":

Garlic and sapphires in the mud
 Clot the bedded axle-tree.
 The trilling wire in the blood
 Sings below inveterate scars
 Appeasing long forgotten wars.
 The dance along the artery
 The circulation of the lymph
 Are figured in the drift of stars
 Ascend to summer in the tree
 We move above the moving tree
 In light upon the figured leaf
 And hear upon the sodden floor
 Below, the boarhound and the boar
 Pursue their pattern as before
 But reconciled among the stars.⁸⁹

The resolution of the temporal and a-temporal rhythms and rituals as Becket perceives them "now", is the objective correlative of the perfection of Becket's will. Becket is freed from his attachment to created goods, both material and spiritual; he has contemplated and accepted the boredom which Sweeney's girl, Doris, feared she would find if she gave up cinemas, motor cars, and telephones to go to a tropical island.⁹⁰ The Rock himself describes perfectly what Becket has achieved, but, with the added note of a direct contemporary focus:

THE ROCK

The lot of man is ceaseless labour,
 Or ceaseless idleness, which is still harder,
 Or irregular labour, which is not pleasant.
 I have trodden the winepress alone, and I know
 That it is hard to be really useful, resigning
 The things that men count for happiness, seeking
 The good deeds that lead to obscurity, accepting
 With equal face those that bring ignominy,
 The applause of all or the love of none.
 All men are ready to invest their money
 But most expect dividends.
 I say to you: Make perfect your will.
 I say: take no thought to the harvest,
 But only of proper sowing.

The world turns and the world changes,
 But one thing does not change.
 However you disguise it, this thing does not change:
 The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil.
 Forgetful, you neglect your shrines and churches;
 The men you are in these times deride
 What has been done of good, you find explanations
 To satisfy the rational and enlightened mind.
 Second, you neglect and belittle the desert.
 The desert is not only around the corner,
 The desert is squeezed in the tube-train next to you,
 Squeezed like tooth-paste in the tube-train next to you,
 The desert is in the heart of your brother.
 The good man is the builder, if he build what is good.
 I will show you the things that are now being done,
 And some of the things that were long ago done,
 That you may take heart. Make perfect your will.
 Let me show you the work of the humble. Listen.⁹¹

Just as "the humble" in The Rock build a physical church, so Becket, perfecting his will by perceiving, accepting and moving in harmony with an action greater than his own, lays the cornerstone for the spiritual Church. Becket has achieved what Eliot thought modern society should allow as possible for every individual:

The ideas of authority, of hierarchy, of discipline and order, applied inappropriately in the temporal sphere, may lead us into some error of absolutism or impossible theocracy. Or the ideas of humanity, brotherhood, equality before God, may lead us to affirm that the Christian can only be a socialist. Heresy is always possible; and where there is one possible heresy, there are always at least two; and when two doctrines contradict each other, we do not always remember that both may be wrong. And heresy may extend, of course, into affairs of this world which people do not ordinarily judge according to such standards: we might expect to find it, for instance, in some forms of Fascism as well as in some forms of Socialism. It is inevitable, in any organization of men which does not recognize the Christian foundations of society. And we need not be surprised to find two antithetical heresies existing in conjunction. The conception of individual liberty, for instance, must be based upon the unique importance of every single soul, the knowledge that every man is ultimately responsible for his own salvation or damnation, and the consequent obligation of society to allow every individual the opportunity to develop his full humanity. But unless this humanity is considered always in relation to God, we may expect to find an excessive love of created beings, in other words humanitarianism,

leading to a genuine oppression of human beings in what is conceived by other human beings to be their interest.⁹²

Just as the second fragment of Sweeney Agonistes raises the level of ritual from common recurrence to religious celebration by the introduction of a ritual meal, so "Part Two" of Murder in the Cathedral raises the simple counterpoint of the temporal / a-temporal ritual sequence to a level of religious sacrifice. What happens is that the moment of Becket's perfection of will, his moment of victory over the antagonists of the agon, is extended in time and place so that what has happened outside time can be meaningfully expressed in time.⁹³ Once Becket's will has been perfected, he must struggle to keep it that way:

All my life they have been coming, these feet. All my life
I have waited. Death will come only when I am worthy,
And if I am worthy, there is no danger.
I have therefore only to make perfect my will.

[II, 259 - 262]

The counterpoint of the religious sacrifice reverses, in "Part Two", the temporal / a-temporal polarity. The chorus chants five progressively more religious rituals which contain among them four happenings in time, based on events of the original Becket's life. Only the third happening, Becket's death, takes on an overt religious character as the actual sacrifice is performed. This third happening might even be considered one with the third and fourth passages of the Chorus.

The prime characteristic of the choral passages of "Part Two" is their static quality. Time has for the moment ceased to exist:

CHORUS

. . .
 What sign of the spring of the year?
 Only the death of the old: not a stir, not a shoot,
 not a breath.

[II, 3 - 4]

Becket's acceptance of the a-temporal rhythm has, for the moment, allowed the Chorus itself to stop and listen for that same rhythm. The church or cathedral which they as an assembly constitute is purged of the evils of time, and waits for consecration, or dedication to God. Their assembly is to become an external sign or sacrament of the eternal presence of an a-temporal rhythm. Hence, the passages of the Chorus become progressively more formal and more apparently Gregorian in their rhythmic structure.

The first passage of the Chorus in particular establishes a moment of static calm before the storm. The second passage is an inventory of the sense-life of the Chorus, and also a ritual confession of an attachment through the senses to all created beings, both spiritual and material:

CHORUS

. . .
 I have consented, Lord Archbishop, have consented.
 Am torn away, subdued, violated,
 United to the spiritual flesh of nature,
 Mastered by the animal powers of spirit,
 Dominated by the lust of self-demolition,
 By the final utter uttermost death of spirit,
 By the final ecstasy of waste and shame.
 O Lord Archbishop, O Thomas Archbishop, forgive us,
 forgive us, pray for us that we may pray
 for you, out of our shame.

[II, 237 - 244]

The more a-temporal the Chorus's chants become, the more conscious the Chorus becomes of its sinful condition, and of its a-temporal reality. The third passage of the Chorus takes on the very formal structure of the last rites as the life of the senses is extinguished and the dark night of the soul, the pure boredom, is experienced in the modern terms of The Waste Land and The Hollow Men:

CHORUS

. . .
 The agents of hell disappear, the human, they shrink
 and dissolve
 Into dust on the wind, forgotten, unmemorable; only
 is here
 The white flat face of Death, God's silent servant,
 And behind the face of Death the Judgement

 And behind the Judgement the Void, more horrid than
 active shapes of hell;
 Emptiness, absence, separation from God;
 The horror of the effortless journey, to the empty land
 Which is no land, only emptiness, absence, the Void,
 Where those who were men can no longer turn the mind
 To distraction, delusion, escape into dream, pretence,
 Where the soul is no longer deceived, for there are
 no objects, no tones,
 No colours, no forms to distract, to divert the soul
 From seeing itself, foully united forever, nothing
 with nothing,
 Not what we call death, but what beyond death is not
 death,
 We fear, we fear.

[II, 288 - 302]

The fourth passage of the Chorus is a ritual Baptism calling for the grace of Christ to wash the foulness of the world. Place is dissolved into the past; there is no distinction of any time or place:

CHORUS

. . . . Where is England? where is Kent?
 where is Canterbury?
 O far far far far in the past; and I wander in a land
 of barren boughs: if I break them, they bleed;

I wander in a land of dry stones: if I touch
 them they bleed.
 How can I ever return, to the soft quiet seasons?
 Night stay with us, stop sun, hold season, let
 the day not come, let the spring not come.

.

In life there is not time to grieve long.
 But this, this is out of life, this is out of time,
 An instant eternity of evil and wrong.
 We are soiled by a filth that we cannot clean,
 united to supernatural vermin,
 It is not we alone, it is not the house, it is not
 the city that is defiled,
 But the world that is wholly foul.

[II, 397 - 422]

The condition of the mass mind precisely as collective is also the condition of man suffering from Original Sin. Just as collective man cannot go back to a state of sinlessness, so the mass mind, having accepted the secular values of the city, cannot go back "to the soft quiet seasons". Conversely, just as Eliot has translated the Christian Sacraments into modern terms by the Chorus in "Part Two", so the Church in the modern world is going to have to translate its actions into a language that can deal with the mass mind. What Eliot has said of the rebuilding of London applies by analogy to the rebuilding of the Church:

You cannot content yourself, in London, with merely collecting sums to preserve bits here and there. Here obviously the problem of preservation cannot be separated from the problem of intelligent building. And for the intelligent appreciation of both problems, we must aim to get at some real understanding of the changes which are taking place in society, an understanding which will distinguish between those which are inevitable and those which should be combatted, between those which are beneficial and those which are pernicious. It is as important, to take questions which are actual - to plan wisely for the future development of the Surrey Bank, and to see that the new suburbs in Middlesex are properly provided with parks and gardens and arranged so that they may grow to be communities, as it is to preserve any part of rural England, or any number of historic monuments. And in this context we have to ask the question whether it is desirable that the large towns should become

larger; whether it is healthy that the mind of the whole nation should become urban. And in asking such questions we are questioning all the assumptions of our society for many generations past.⁹⁴

The final choral chant is a formal ritual of thanksgiving based on the hymn, Te Deum. The Sacraments of Holy Communion, signified by the sharing of the reflected glory of Becket's martyrdom; and of Matrimony, signified by the wedding of time and eternity, which are rituals having correlatives in Attic phallic worship, bring about a final resolution or harmony of the temporal and a-temporal rhythms.⁹⁵ The problem of individuality versus the mass mind is also resolved, but by the very special meta-theatrical device of the Chorus's acknowledgement of itself, not as a group of human beings, but as a single fictional type having only the substance of a theatrical character:

Forgive us, O Lord, we acknowledge ourselves as type of the common man,
 Of the men and women who shut the door and sit by the fire;
 Who fear the blessing of God, the loneliness of the night of God,
 the surrender required, the deprivation inflicted;
 Who fear the injustice of men less than the justice of God;
 Who fear the hand at the window, the fire in the thatch, the fist in
 the tavern, the push into the canal,
 Less than we fear the love of God.
 We acknowledge our trespass, our weakness, our fault; we acknowledge
 That the sin of the world is upon our heads; that the blood of the
 martyrs and the agony of the saints
 Is upon our heads.
 Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Blessed Thomas, pray for us.

[II, 638 - 650]

The Chorus finds the significance of its collectivity in the individuality of Becket, just as the body of Christians is one with the Body of Christ.

In the same way that Becket contains or experiences within himself the temptations in "Part One", so in "Part Two" the Chorus

contains within its collective awareness the experiences of Becket. Each experience is a temptation for the Chorus to abandon its witnessing or martyrdom. Yet there is no place for the Chorus to go. The longer it stays, the more formal becomes its martyrdom.

In counterpoint to the increasing formality of the Chorus stand the four happenings of Becket, each of which is a secular ritual in a very strange sense. Each happening is a travesty of those common courtesies of hospitality which are secular because they are public customs, some of which still survive. The first happening uses an almost Brechtian device of banners, each signifying a holy day⁹⁶, to move from the a-temporal moment of the Chorus's first speech to temporal chatter of the Priests:

FIRST PRIEST

To-day?

SECOND PRIEST

To-day, what is to-day? For the day is half gone.

FIRST PRIEST

To-day, what is to-day? but another day, the dusk of
the year.

SECOND PRIEST

To-day, what is to-day? Another night, and another dawn.

THIRD PRIEST

What day is the day that we know that we hope for or
fear for?

Every day is the day we should fear from or hope
from. One moment

Weights like another. Only in retrospection, selection.

We say, that was the day. The critical moment

That is always now, and here. Even now, in sordid
particulars

The eternal design may appear.

In this first happening the four Knights announce themselves, and when offered "Dinner before business", they reply: "Business before dinner. We will roast your pork/ First, and dine upon it after" [II, 77 - 79]. First things first! The business itself, besides the "roasting" of Thomas as the sacrificial victim, consists of public accusations against Becket by the King. The Knights wish to travesty the official character of these accusations by making them in private. In a masterful poetic stroke Eliot changed the moment from a private to a public one with a simple ritual formula:

THOMAS

What you have to say
By the King's command - if it be the King's command -
Should be said in public. If you make charges,
Then in public I will refute them.

FIRST KNIGHT

No! here and now!

[They make to attack him, but the priests and attendants
return and quietly interpose themselves.]

THOMAS

Now and here!

[II, 127 - 131]

The second happening sees the Priests violate Becket's right to do as he will in his own house. They haul him off into hiding. They also travesty the spiritual significance of Vespers by using Vespers to shield Becket from the consequences of his worldly business. The third happening, Becket's death, begins with the Priests barring the entrance to the Church. This too is a travesty of a public freedom:

THOMAS

Unbar the doors! throw open the doors!
 I will not have the house of prayer, the church of Christ,
 The sanctuary, turned into a fortress.
 The Church shall protect her own in her own way, not
 As oak and stone; stone and oak decay,
 Give no stay, but the Church shall endure.
 The church shall be open, even to our enemies. Open
 the door!

[II, 316 - 322]

The sacrifice itself is of course a travesty of the public custom or right of sanctuary.

Becket's death is not, however, just an infringement of a public custom, it is also a religious act in a very negative sense. Becket's death is the second action of the play, following directly out of his first action of resisting the temptations. The process which brings Becket into the "now" or makes him present as a sort of archetypal god of personal integrity also brings him directly into contact with the processes of the secular or time world. The indignities inflicted on him by both Knights and Priests are each a growing affirmation of the presence of time. The final religious indignity of the desecration of the cathedral, and of Becket's position as Archbishop and Christian, are an extension of the same "now" of Becket's moment of acceptance. Becket betrays the secular by giving his loyalty to the will of God, and is in turn betrayed by the secular:

KNIGHTS

Traitor! traitor! traitor!

THOMAS

You, Reginald, three times traitor you:
 Traitor to me as my temporal vassal,
 Traitor to me as your spiritual lord,
 Traitor to God in desecrating his Church.

FIRST KNIGHT

No faith do I owe to a renegade,
And what I owe shall now be paid.

THOMAS

Now to Almighty God, to the Blessed Mary ever
Virgin, to the blessed John the Baptist, the holy
apostles Peter and Paul, to the blessed martyr Denys,
and to all the Saints, I commend my cause and that of
the Church.

[I, 386 - 396]

The final happening, the Knights' speeches, is a public ritual of self-justification in which the Knights ironically accuse, judge, condemn and hang themselves. It is also a betrayal of both the public custom of respect for the dead, and the theatrical convention of distancing from the audience. During these speeches (which are given directly to the audience) time conquers, for there is no structuring by rhythm as in most of the play, or by faith as in the "Sermon".

Becket's "Sermon", or "Interlude", stands in prose as an address to the secular world, an interpretation in secular language of what Becket experiences outside of time. The Knights' addresses stand in irrevocable opposition as a denial of any meaning in Becket's action and suffering. As the "Sermon" is a prose resolution of the contrapuntal rhythms of the play, so the Knights' addresses are a destruction of that resolution, a dispersal of whatever spiritual energies may remain present, and a dismissal of the people. Becket has, however, already rebutted the Knight's speeches, and thwarted their effect, in his chastisement of the Priests for their secularity:

THOMAS

Unbar the door!
You think me reckless, desperate and mad.
You argue by results, as this world does,

To settle if an act be good or bad.
 You defer to the fact. For every life and every act
 Consequence of good and evil can be shown.
 And as in time results of many deeds are blended
 So good and evil in the end become confounded.
 It is not in time that my death shall be known;
 It is out of time that my decision is taken
 If you call that decision to which my whole
 being gives entire consent.
 I give my life
 To the Law of God above the Law of Man.

[II, 331 - 344]

Out of the range of rhythms which vary from the earthy beats of Everyman to the ethereal patterns of Gregorian chant, Eliot developed a counterpoint of temporal and a-temporal ritual sequences. This counterpoint operates primarily as a confrontation of two states of mind: one which argues "by results", which, like both criminal and detective, defers "to the fact"; and one which defers to the larger pattern of an action "out of time". The myth which is developed out of this counterpoint, and which at the same time tends to structure the counterpoint, is not simply the myth of the Crucifixion, of the phallic ritual as interpreted by Cornford, or even of the Mass and Sacraments of the Catholic Church, but a basic perception on Eliot's part that the temporal and a-temporal cannot be brought into harmony by man. This is the myth of war, the law of God versus the law of man.

Becket's death, like World War Two, and like the theories of dialectical materialism, seems inevitable. Consequently, the play stands as a mythic pattern for Christians of the twentieth century to follow, when confronted with moments of inevitability in which the conflict is much more between the worldly and the eternal, than between any two earthly factions:

I cannot agree with those who maintain that no war can be just: for a just war seems to me perfectly conceivable. But in practice, if we refuse to consider the causes, and consider a war only at the moment when it breaks out, there is likely to be a good deal of justice on both sides: and if we do consider its causes, we are likely to find a good deal of injustice on both sides. The believer in just war is in danger of inferring, at the moment when war seems to be inevitable, that that war is necessarily just; on the other hand the person who sees clearly the injustice behind the war may be equally in error in assuming that because the war is unjust, he is justified in refusing to take part in it. And it is almost impossible to say anything about the subject without being misunderstood by one or both parties of simplifiers. (Yet Æschylus, at least, understood that it may be a man's duty to commit a crime, and to accomplish his expiation for it.) The whole notion of justice is travestied when we draw too sharp a distinction between war and peace. If we gave enough thought and effort to the institution of justice during the condition of 'peace', we might not need to exercise our consciences so violently in anticipation of war. The economic causes are the most accessible and the most amenable; even though they are only abstractions from the general stupidity and sinfulness of mankind. The problem of conscience towards war is far too deeply rooted in the general problem of evil to be settled by letters to The Times.⁹⁷

In a sense, then, the myth or entire pattern of meaning which the play unfolds is expressed in one line when Becket says, "It is the just man who/ Like a bold lion, should be without fear./ I am here" [II, 365 - 367]. The play is, as the title suggests, about crime and punishment; but what the crime is and who the criminal, who the prosecution and defense attorneys, who the judge and jury, depends on where one's allegiance lies. Becket commits the crime of using the spiritual for temporal purposes, and is judged by King Henry, juried by the Chorus, prosecuted and executed by the Knights.

Of Eliot's three city rituals, two, Sweeney Agonistes and Murder in the Cathedral, provide strongly pointed dramatic struggles between man and his city environment. They underline the fact that that environment consists not in the details of buildings, streets,

parks and trees, so much as in a commercially-oriented cultural life style which Eliot called Secularism. Secularism is a disease which infects the language, emotion, and morality of city man and which begs for the mythic detoxification of poetic drama. By injecting the action of the stage into the language, emotion, and morality of city man, Eliot worked out, for himself at least, rituals to effect such a detoxification. Sweeney Agonistes is a ritual exorcizing of the Secular disease of boredom; Murder in the Cathedral is a ritual exorcizing of the forces militating against individuality, forces which treat man en masse as in the case of the commercial marketing of industry, or as in the case of global warfare.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOUR URBAN MORALITIES

Eliot's shift from an overtly ritualistic poetic drama to a superficially naturalistic one could easily be taken as a contradiction of his previous anti-naturalistic and anti-Secularistic position. It is very possible that such a contradiction cannot be disproved, although there would be little value in any attempt to suggest that this possible contradiction invalidated either the work which preceded it or that which came after it. Eliot, after all, had a right to do as he wished with his own work. There remains simply the fact that Eliot chose to commit himself more to the writing of plays and less to the development of a theory of poetic drama.¹ Eliot's shift meant that he would no longer be trying to create a revolution in drama as he had in poetry. This decision on his part came as a disappointment to a person such as E. Martin Browne, Eliot's producer:

In 1935, freed from the then rigidly imposed restrictions of the proscenium by the lucky accident of having a bare platform at Canterbury, he wrote Murder as a pioneer in stagecraft; twenty years later, to enter the commercial theatre, he had come to terms with the proscenium at the moment when the open stage was breaking through it. The proportion of time occupied in the later plays by the naturalistic surface of behaviour is too large, for it is now unnecessary; the proportion of prosaic writing is too large, and inadequately spiced with the kind of comedy which enlivened The Cocktail Party.²

Eliot himself, on the other hand, was quite happy to be working in a way in which he felt he could communicate more completely with his audiences. Perhaps his use of a naturalistic surface in his last four plays was the result of a deeper sense of obligation to those who might

witness his plays:

What we have to do is to bring poetry into the world in which the audience lives and to which it returns when it leaves the theatre; not to transport the audience into some imaginary world totally unlike its own, an unreal world in which poetry is tolerated. What I should hope might be achieved, by a generation of dramatists having the benefit of our experience, is that the audience should find, at the moment of awareness that it is hearing poetry, that it is saying to itself: 'I could talk in poetry too!' Then we should not be transported into an artificial world; on the contrary, our own sordid, dreary daily world would be suddenly illuminated and transfigured.³

A deeper regard for the audience meant that Eliot could presume nothing.

Each new audience had to be given what it could handle, not what Eliot himself wanted to handle:

. . . the unknown audience cannot be expected to show any indulgence towards the poet. The poet cannot afford to write his play merely for his admirers, those who know his non-dramatic work and are prepared to receive favourably anything he puts his name to. He must write with an audience in view which knows nothing and cares nothing, about any previous success he may have had before he ventured into the theatre. Hence one finds out that many of the things one likes to do, and knows how to do, are out of place; and that every line must be judged by a new law, that of dramatic relevance.⁴

This concern for the role of the audience in the theatre, was not, however, something new on Eliot's part. The very openness of the music-hall to audience participation had given that entertainment its high place in Eliot's regard.⁵ As well, even before Eliot submitted his first modern dress play for production, he had told Pound emphatically of the absolute necessity of retaining the audience's attention.⁶

Concentration on the audience was new only in degree, not in kind. Eliot, in responding to the command of the Thunder to give, to sympathise and control, had taken his poetic perception of the dramatic struggle between man and environment from the level of description in poetry to that of action in theatre. He was now simply intensifying

that response. He was confronting openly the very people engaged in that dramatic struggle, and was presenting them with the environment against which they were striving:

If the poetic drama is to reconquer its place, it must, in my opinion, enter into overt competition with prose drama. As I have said, people are prepared to put up with verse from the lips of personages dressed in the fashion of some distant age: therefore they should be made to hear it from people dressed like ourselves, living in houses and apartments like ours, and using telephones and motor cars and radio sets.⁷

Eliot no longer needed The Criterion to make direct commentary on man's current social condition. What he needed was a versatile theatrical voice.

In Murder in the Cathedral Eliot had achieved his first full characterization, his first real success in transcending simple description. Becket acted. He did something. Becket's action, however, was solitary. It was one man's action participated in by other semi-formed characters. The poetic medium Eliot worked in, that is, the rhythmic counterpoint between secular and a-temporal styles of speech, directed itself completely to this concentrated, unitary, focus. And it avoided the problem of writing in a verse which imitated Shakespeare. It apparently left Eliot with nothing to use in future plays:

It was only when I put my mind to thinking what sort of play I wanted to do next, that I realized that in Murder in the Cathedral I had not solved any general problem; but that from my point of view the play was a dead end.⁸

To handle the environment of the modern city Eliot needed an appropriately modern verse style which would allow him to manage more than one action by more than one character at the same time. His experiments, theories, and productions had not given him such a verse.

The verse which Eliot developed in The Family Reunion and finalised in The Cocktail Party suited itself so closely to the modern environment that it seemed almost to be prose. It was deliberately fashioned to support Eliot's principle that, above all, the dramatist must hold the attention of the audience:

This rhythm is designed to do for the play what those sheets of wire-mesh that are laid under the surface of roads do for the concrete above them. They are a support, unseen by the road-user, which keeps the surface stable not by rigidity but by tensile strength. So the verse rhythm is not meant to be noticed by the hearer: indeed nothing pleases Eliot better than when people say they didn't realise, while seeing it, that the play was in verse. It is meant to act upon the subconscious of the audience as a pulse which bonds the play together and suggests that the individual relationships which make up the plot conceal a universal idea, and to allow those relationships to be expressed in words to a far greater extent than would seem compatible with truth to character were the play to be written in prose.⁹

This principle of maintaining audience attention while operating on the audience's subconscious, that is, the principle of what might be called peripheral vision, was probably the single most important factor in determining the nature of the last four plays. It was a principle which was reflected in, or operated at, all levels of Eliot's theatrical concern, from his notes on finished productions to his influence on those who produced the plays. Some attention therefore should be paid to the principle of peripheral vision before any discussion of the naturalistic surface of the plays, and the sub-surface rituals which structure the plays, is undertaken.

The principle of peripheral vision was, to begin with, a craftsman's principle and one which, to a certain extent, reflected the thinking of Walter Pater and the art pur cult:

It seems to me that beyond the nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life when directed towards action - the

part of life which prose drama is wholly adequate to express - there is a fringe of indefinite extent, of feeling which we can only detect, so to speak, out of the corner of the eye and can never completely focus; of feeling of which we are only aware in a kind of temporary detachment from action. There are great prose dramatists - such as Ibsen and Chekhov - who have at times done things of which I would not otherwise have supposed prose to be capable, but who seem to me, in spite of their success, to have been hampered in expression by writing in prose. This peculiar range of sensibility can be expressed by dramatic poetry, at its moments of greatest intensity. At such moments, we touch the border of those feelings which only music can express. We can never emulate music, because to arrive at the condition of music would be the annihilation of poetry, and especially of dramatic poetry. Nevertheless, I have before my eyes a kind of mirage of the perfection of verse drama, which would be a design of human action and of words, such as to present at once the two aspects of dramatic and of musical order.¹⁰

The "nameable, classifiable emotions and motives of our conscious life when directed towards action" constitute the surface of Eliot's naturalistic dramas. It was for these elements that Eliot invented his almost prose-like verse style. But the major actions of the plays, the large encompassing events which move through the tangle of daily textures, constitute the substance of the plays. These major actions suit themselves well to Eliot's metaphor of music for they are ritual actions. They derive from a rhythmic source and they express a myth. These rituals are not handed to the audience directly, because the audience would have no way of understanding them. In this way Eliot acknowledged the limitations of his medium and learned to work within those limitations.

Furthermore, Eliot was quite aware that there was little value in preaching a Christian message directly to a non-Christian city. Eliot could not, for instance, approach literature as Chesterton had approached it:

What I want is a literature which should be unconsciously, rather than deliberately and defiantly, Christian: because the work of Mr. Chesterton has its point from appearing in a world which is definitely not Christian.¹¹

Even more than in the field of literature, Eliot was convinced that in drama the Christian message must be indirect. Eliot expressed this conviction in very heavy-handed terms in a letter to Browne, who was faced with the job of keeping the message indirect:

I have always been most desirous to see ordinary plays written by Christians rather than plays of overtly Christian purpose. In the theatre, I feel that one wants a Christian mentality to permeate the theatre, to affect it and to influence audiences who might be obdurate to plays of directly religious appeal.¹²

The principle of peripheral vision - besides being the structural force behind Eliot's verse style, the strategical tactic of his surrender to the limitations of his audience, and the religious gesture which allowed his sub-surface rituals to perform a Christian task - was, as well, a political manoeuvre on Eliot's part. By extension, in the Christian city that Eliot felt might be possible on earth, the principles of Christianity were peripheral in their influence on government. The statesman need not carry, or wear a cross:

It is not primarily the Christianity of the statesmen that matters, but their being confined, by the temper and traditions of the people which they rule, to a Christian framework within which to realise their ambitions and advance the prosperity and prestige of their country. They may frequently perform un-Christian acts; they must never attempt to defend their actions on un-Christian principles.¹³

The motivation behind Eliot's use of this principle of peripheral vision was his understanding of the natural law of cultural growth:

You cannot, in any scheme for the reformation of society, aim directly at a condition in which the arts will flourish: these activities are probably by-products for which we cannot deliberately arrange the conditions.¹⁴

The Christian "temper and traditions" which would influence the non-Christian statesman indirectly through an art such as the theatre, required a healthy cultural climate. The healthy cultural climate did not examine its own health or ask itself how Christian it was. This natural law virtually dictated that the Christian dramatist look anywhere but at himself.

Why Eliot should have decided on indirect vision as a dominant principle in the twentieth century cannot of course be known. Perhaps his decision reflects certain Thomistic principles popular among Catholic writers, such principles as that the soul knows itself only indirectly, through an examination of its actions; or, possibly, principles similar to the one reflected in certain lines of The Four Quartets:

You can receive this: "on whatever sphere of being
The mind of a man may be intent
At the time of death" - that is the one action
(And the time of death is every moment)
Which shall fructify in the lives of others:
And do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward.¹⁵

Eliot's decision may also have been the result of an artistic intuition which made him aware of the kind of eyes with which his audience, already conditioned by radio and television, would be viewing his plays:

[Arthur] Hurst discovered that TV child had a near-point reading distance that made visual convergence impossible. The TV child is in fact a 'Cyclops' who increasingly uses one eye both for reading and ordinary vision. Paradoxically, the other eye ranges peripherally, like that of a hunter.

The one-eyed child, in losing convergence, naturally finds no great relevance in reading but compensates for his difficulty by developing the visual habits suited to the total field of the hunter. Near-point working distance is officially thirteen to sixteen inches, and school furniture and text books are accommodated to this theoretic norm. Some educationists, on discovering that the near-point is only 4.6 inches, simply brush aside the fact by

mentioning that reading is no longer the main concern of the child in advanced school. The child now tends to transfer his activities from reading to manipulatory work, making his own books and dictionaries.¹⁶

Certainly the Cyclopic TV child bears a resemblance, if in name only, to that master of indirect discourse, One-eyed Riley, of The Cocktail Party. Perhaps Riley, as Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly - the psychiatrist, is himself the clue to the appropriateness of peripheral vision to twentieth-century art. Reilly, who seems more able to judge people by what they don't say than by what they do say, and who seems to be able to "sense" people's destinies, is an embodiment of a kind of indirect mentality which Eliot could endure if he could not accept, and which would seem to lend itself very handily to peripheral vision:

. . . the chief use of psychology (apart from curing people, if it does) seems to me to be to restate old truths in modern jargon which people can understand; and if psychology helps people towards truth which they cannot apprehend when put in simple theological language, so much the better.¹⁷

In the terms of the present discussion, the principle of peripheral vision is that principle according to which Eliot created, underneath the naturalistic surface of his plays, a specific a-temporal ritual with which to structure each play. Peripheral vision is the means whereby that sub-surface ritual becomes apparent. In the case of each play the ritual is simple and all-encompassing and is therefore something which anyone who is involved in it cannot easily be aware of, and which, indeed, none of the characters are ever totally aware of. The major tensions of the plays are created by characters who unconsciously struggle against this basic ritual. Such struggles are not, however, simple conflicts. The antagonist, so to speak, is not really the rebellious character himself, but the surface world which obscures the

basic ritual from the vision of such a character. It is this surface world, the environment of people, machines, customs, and all the other elements of the modern city, which that character must struggle with in order to free himself to follow the basic ritual. Usually the character cannot struggle against the surface world on his own. Other characters or forces, closely related to the basic ritual, must help him. If he accepts their help then his major struggle against the basic ritual is at an end. His secondary struggle against the environment is then quite resolvable, if with a certain amount of effort. Because the greater part of the playing time is taken up in dealing with the surface world, the world of secondary struggle, and because the basic rituals, being simple and broad in nature, can be easily outlined once the surface world is examined, it will be advantageous to examine that surface world first.

Eliot's statement that the "tension within the society may become also a tension within the mind of the more conscious individual" provides an essential understanding of the relation of his general world-view to the surface world he created in his new urban plays.¹⁸ In that general world-view the solution of tensions of both the world and the individual were very closely related:

I believe that at the present time the problem of the unification of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual, are in the end one and the same problem; and that the solution of one is the solution of the other. Analytical psychology (even if accepted far more enthusiastically than I can accept it) can do little except produce monsters; for it is attempting to produce unified individuals in a world without unity; the social, political, and economic sciences can do little, for they are attempting to produce the great society with an aggregation of human beings who are not units but merely bundles of incoherent impulses and beliefs. The problem of nationalism and the problem of dissociated personalities may turn out to be the same.¹⁹

By creating, therefore, a superficial world of modern city dwellers solving their individual problems, Eliot was making a contribution to the solution of more general social tensions. It is, consequently, of vital importance to pay attention to the dimensions of the surface world of his plays. Nations could live inside the limits within which his characters do.

Eliot himself made an outline of the dimensions of modern city living which can be used to test the equivalent dimensions of his plays. He distinguished an official or public world; a private, social world; and a solitary world. He also suggested that a healthy cross-fertilization of these worlds was the key to both the prevention of, and solution of tensions within each, and between all these worlds:

I have suggested elsewhere that a society is in danger of disintegration when there is lack of contact between people of different areas of activity - between the political, the scientific, the artistic, the philosophical and the religious minds. This separation cannot be repaired merely by public organisation. It is not a question of assembling into committees representatives of different types of knowledge and experience, of calling in everybody to advise everybody else. The élite should be something different, something much more organically composed, than a panel of bonzes, caciques and tycoons. Men who meet only for definite serious purposes, and on official occasions, do not wholly meet. They may have some common concern very much at heart; they may, in the course of repeated contacts, come to share a vocabulary and an idiom which appear to communicate every shade of meaning necessary for their common purpose; but they will continue to retire from these encounters each to his private social world as well as to his solitary world. Everyone has observed that the possibilities of contented silence, of a mutual happy awareness when engaged upon a common task, or an underlying seriousness and significance in the enjoyment of a silly joke, are characteristics of any close personal intimacy; and the congeniality of any circle of friends depends upon a common social convention, a common ritual, and common pleasures of relaxation. These aids to intimacy are no less important for the communication of meaning in words, than the possession of a common subject upon which the several parties are informed. It is unfortunate for a man when his friends and his business associates are two unrelated groups; it is also narrowing when they are one and the same group.²⁰

The official, social and solitary worlds which Eliot defined in the everyday life of people, can also, with great reward, be defined in his plays. Within the surface world of the plays it is possible to distinguish three atmospheres or spaces (a word congenial to the spatial nature of the stage) which correspond with the three worlds.

Corresponding to what Eliot described as meetings "on official occasions" there can be found a kind of public atmosphere or space, a space in which the characters are relating to the world of people in general or to public opinion. In this public space Eliot's characters are concerned with the images of themselves which they project, and with the images of their emotional needs which they project onto other people. Eliot's "private social world", on the other hand, is manifested as a private space in the plays. Private space is created by the characters when they relate to friends or close relations whom they know intimately. Although private space does not necessarily dominate the motivations of Eliot's characters, it is (nevertheless, given the traditional privacy of naturalistic theatre) the most frequently used space in the plays. The strongest motivations of Eliot's characters come from the "solitary world" or personal space of each character. The personal space of a character involves particularly his past, usually a past in which there is some hidden mis-deed which must be faced before his emotional needs, another important constituent of personal space, can be controlled and satisfied in the present. The personal space is closely linked to the public space through the mechanism of projection. The unsatisfied personal space subconsciously projects in public what it can not admit either to itself or to the

friends of its private space. The private space itself becomes strangely public or a-personal, when the personal space projects its needs at an intimate acquaintance. As Martin Browne has said:

One of Eliot's recurrent themes is the danger we all run of making use of people by seeing them as 'projections' of our own desires. No true relationship can exist unless we see them as they are, as human beings; and until we are ready to say we are sorry, as Celia does to both Edward and Lavinia, for the damage we have done by our self-centered view of them.²¹

Ultimately, of course, it is the personal space which must be adjusted for the individual character to establish harmony with the basic ritual. The present discussion will therefore treat the public and private spaces first, and then deal with the personal space as a kind of preface to the discussion of the basic rituals. The following exploration of public space will examine a possible perceptual structure of the space, as well as the importance to the public space of the news media, the Eumenides, the police, and especially Harcourt-Reilly as a detective-doctor-cook figure. A final note will examine the crime or disease of boundary transgressions (usually perpetrated by means of projections).

The public space in Eliot's final four plays derives its character, in part at least, from Eliot's antipathy to the commercial culture of Secularism. His characters find themselves in a dilemma not unlike that he ascribed to the modern Christian:

The problem of leading a Christian life in a non-Christian society is now very present to us, and it is a very different problem from that of the accommodation between an Established Church and dissenters. It is not merely the problem of a minority in a society of individuals holding an alien belief. It is the problem constituted by our implication in a network of institutions from which we cannot dissociate ourselves: institutions the operation of which appears no longer neutral, but non-Christian. And as for the Christian who is not conscious of his dilemma - and he is in the majority - he is

becoming more and more de-Christianised by all sorts of unconscious pressure: paganism holds all the most valuable advertising space.²²

The total permeation of the public space by Secularism created for Eliot a very definite public state of mind. The public space became a kind of giant cycloramic screen onto which were projected the unhealthy and unconscious attitudes of a personal space motivated by Secularistic aims.

To understand the nature of public space as a screen onto which are projected the images of the personal space is to understand Eliot's antipathy to the day-dream culture of the modern cinema. Indeed, Wyndham Lewis provided a detailed analysis of twentieth-century perceptual modes which linked the secular or time-oriented philosophies of thinkers like Bergson and Russell, with the cinematic process. Although there is little likelihood that Eliot was seconding Lewis' ideas, what Lewis had to say nevertheless did provide an insight into the way in which personal space was projecting its emotions onto the screen of the public space. In other words, Lewis provided a possible description of the perceptual dimensions of the public space of Eliot's plays.

To begin with, Lewis described the perceptual world of time-oriented philosophies as an interior world, a world quite distinct from the spatial world of common sense or of a philosophy like that of Kant:

Kant's conception of Space is about identical with the popular or 'common-sense' view: it is a datum we cannot get behind, installed in the very centre of our perceptive faculty. It is independent of its content. The homogeneous, empty, isolable space of Kant, is as instinctive to us as the supposed ineradicably qualified, full, differentiated space of animals. The manner in which birds and insects find their way to their destinations, sometimes covering great distances, is apparently owing to the fact that for them there is no space, as we apprehend it, but an infinitely varied, thick, highly

magnetized and coloured, medium, instead. Their world is not a world of distinct objects. It is an interpenetrating world of direct sensation. It is, in short, Mr. Bergson's world. It is not our hated geometric world, of one space. It is a mental, as it were an interior world, of palpitating movement, visually indistinct, electrical; not all arranged on the principles of surfaces and lines; and it is without a 'void' at all. What we have to grasp in the Bergson world of 'durée', is that it is an interior world. And the world of animals or insects is also a mental, interior, world. The exterior world is where 'Space' is, or the mere conception 'external', which is the prime 'spatial' one, is enough: to that concept Bergson, as Alexander, is extremely and temperamentally hostile.²³

The perception of space as mental, as simply interior, was a concept crucial to the Bradleyan orientation of Eliot's own philosophy.²⁴

However, the spatial nature, the homogeneous, empty isolability of the stage was, to say the least, antipathetic to the conception of space as interior and mental. Perhaps this antipathy was behind the fact that Murder in the Cathedral was a dead end, and the Eumenides of The Family Reunion were theatrically unstageable:

In order to show the Eumenides in the window embrasure, the director must place the window in the back wall of the set. This means that, in each act, Harry must be facing upstage, with his face away from the audience, for the climactic moment. He faces a group of figures who neither speak nor move; who have in fact no life for the audience. This is a grave mistake; and Eliot is right in saying that none of the devices that either he or I have used or seen others use has overcome this handicap. The Eumenides, whatever they look like, however eerie the sounds or lighting effects which accompany them, cannot involve the audience in an experience which cannot be seen upon the face of the character who alone can mediate it.²⁵

To understand the antipathy between the common sense, and the interior, mental conceptions of space it is necessary first to realize the role of experience and memory in the fleshing out of the common sense perception of the world: for, as it will be shown, it is the perversion of the role of memory which interiorizes space and results in mental projections. As Lewis pointed out, common sense perception shows the world as a picture, but it is a picture which depends vitally

on the previous experience of all the senses:

The traditional belief of common-sense, embodied in the 'naïf' view of the physical world, is really a picture. We believe that we see a certain objective reality. This contains stable and substantial objects. When we look at these objects we believe that what we are perceiving is what we are seeing. In reality, of course, we are conscious of much more than we immediately see. For in looking at an orange lying before us on the table, we are more or less conscious of its contents, we apprehend it as though we could see all round it, since from experience we know it is round, of the same colour and texture, from whatever position it is examined, and so forth. In short, every time we open our eyes we envelop the world with our memory. It is memory that gives that depth and fullness to our present, and makes our abstract, ideal world of objects for us.

The role of memory in fleshing out the world of the eye is important in relation to Eliot's concern for the past, and the ghosts from the past which plague certain of his characters. All that is needed to convert the common sense, perceptual mode into an interior, mental mode which could make possible the projection of such ghosts, is an over-emphasis on the sequential qualities of the memory. Under these conditions memory becomes a mere store-house of successive past events, and, as Lewis went on to point out, this successiveness results in an awareness not of total sensory experience but simply of motion:

This belief, as I started by saying, is in fact, a picture. And it is this picture for which the cinematograph of the physics of 'events' is to be substituted. It is to be 'taught in schools' (according to Mr. Russell and other enthusiasts); therefore people are to be trained from infancy to regard the world as a moving picture. In this no 'object' would appear, but only the states of an object. It is sought already to cut down the picture of the physical world to what we see. What we know should be excluded. If we want to approximate to the discarded view of the percipient of common-sense, we must move round the object, and as far as possible get inside it. With the thousand successive pictures we thus obtain we shall have - only successively, nothing all at once, except a punctual picture and momentary sensation - the perceptual picture of common-sense. Having walked all round, picked up, smelt, cut into as many pieces as possible, and then eaten, the orange, we shall have successively reached the discarded all-at-once perceptive (but platonic) picture of common-sense. But thought, perception, and indeed all the stationary acts of the observer of

'common-sense' or of 'naïf' realism, must be turned into movement. We must move and act, if we wish to apprehend anything, or to have a thing, at all. Through having said that all thought is 'a movement', this type of professor-of-action will in future exact that we shall move and physically function before we can say that we have 'thought' or 'seen'. And there will, of course, be no need to think at all, or even to see. For the action will be the thought, or the vision: just as a thing is its successive 'effects.'²⁷

One virtually disastrous consequence of a successive, cinematographic world is the divorce of sight from touch. Personal contact with the world, is, so to speak, cut off. Indeed, the person, or at least, the personality and its emotions which are so intimately bound up with the sense of touch, ceases itself to have any continuity, and becomes a series of successive, dissociated information receptacles. The person that one is today is not the same as the person that existed yesterday. Indeed, sensation or information input assumes primary importance, and, because of this assumption, all points of sensory data assume an equal reality:

In the world of 'common-sense,' Mr. Russell has told us, 'things that can be seen but not touched (are) thought to be hardly real: to this day the usual mark of a ghost is that it can be seen but not touched.' There are no 'ghosts' in Mr. Russell's world, of course. A thing that endures for an hour (kept going in a constant 'casual' cinematograph, or pattern-group casually connected, and supplied with an abstract soul by Time) has no privileged place from the point of view of reality over a thing that endures only for a few moments.

But what results from the isolation of the space-world of touch and that of sight, is that the pure non-tactile visual world introduces a variety of things to us, on a footing of equality as existing things, which in the world of common-sense (where the tactile sense is fused with the visual) do not possess that equality. Thus it is that the mirror-image draws level with the 'thing' it reflects. And so you arrive at the non-plastic, illusory, Alice-in-Wonderland world of post-einsteinian philosophy.²⁸

It is not difficult, given the Lewisian conception of the dissociation of personality and therefore of the individual, to understand why Eliot should have felt that the "problem of the unification

of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual, are in the end one and the same problem".²⁹ When the individual is reduced to a series of successive sensations, so is his world. As a consequence it is understandable that he should project his need for unity in his immediate world onto the macrocosmic level of the international world. Furthermore, the reduction of the individual to a series of successive sensations allows for no distinctions of public, private, and personal space. Eliot attributed this breakdown of social relationships, and therefore of morality, quite literally to the Secular nature of modern society:

We have less excuse than our ancestors for un-Christian conduct, because the growth of an un-Christian society about us, its more obvious intrusion upon our lives, has been breaking down the comfortable distinction between public and private morality.³⁰

The perception of space as mental, rather than external, as a world of sensation, of happenings, of men of action, rather than as a world of formal relations, of art, and of men of thought as well as of action, has made it possible for the most personal dreams of glory to be openly sought in the public arena - Hitler to wit. Lewis saw this interpenetration of spaces in terms of a universal, amateur take-over of the world of the specialised professional artist:

So at last, having watched with some pain and perplexity the differentiation into artist, spectator and so forth (with the terribly cold marble seats), we are privileged to observe the tide setting back again to those 'deeper, vaguer, more emotional regions.' Once more the 'amateurs' (ἐθελονταί) come crowding back. Once more we live collectively. All men once more are actors.

Now this fusion, or uprising of the audience and return of Everyman into the arena or choral acting-place, is, true enough, occurring universally. But it is not a return to life, as a return to a true primitive belief would be.³¹

According to Lewis, once the public space has been trans-

mogrified by the amateur a further condition or phase is reached. A "collective 'play' is engaged in, in which no 'real' or 'practical' issues are involved." This condition is a "transition" or "bridge", 'back to primitive life,'. . . . It is nothing but a bridge, of course, since people cannot 'play', and fiddle about, for long. The full blind collective ecstasy is not far off when this translation of the spectators into amateurs has been effected".³² Such a transformation of the public space into a global theatre (for example, world war), into the city which is the play outside the play, has become for some a matter of stated policy:

Guerrilla theatre is only a transitional step in the development of total life-actors. Life actors never rehearse and need no script. A life-actor uses whatever he has available, nothing more, nothing less.³³

Eliot was certainly aware of the transformation of the spectator into an amateur and therefore clumsy actor. In The Family Reunion the members of his Chorus find that they are in a dramatic experience in which the roles are playing them, rather than in which they are playing the roles. Perhaps Eliot was hinting at an acting style appropriate to his plays and derived from the contemporary life-style, but apparently left untried:

CHORUS
(IVY, VIOLET, GERALD and CHARLES)

Why do we feel embarrassed, impatient, fretful, ill at ease,
Assembled like amateur actors who have not been assigned
their parts?
Like amateur actors in a dream when the curtain rises, to
find themselves dressed for a different play, or
having rehearsed the wrong parts,
Waiting for the rustling in the stalls, the titter in the
dress circle, the laughter and catcalls in the gallery?

CHARLES

I might have been in St. James's Street, in a comfortable chair rather nearer the fire.

IVY

I might have been visiting Cousin Lily at Sidmouth, if I had not had to come to this party.

GERALD

I might have been staying with Compton-Smith, down at his place in Dorset.

VIOLET

I should have been helping Lady Bumpus, at the Vicar's American Tea.

CHORUS

Yet we are here at Amy's command, to play an unread part in some monstrous farce, ridiculous in some nightmare pantomime.

[1,1,204 - 212]

Eliot's characters are by no means totally committed to the "collective play" which the public space has become. But they do tend to see the public space in such terms. They do indeed see it as a giant cyclo-rama onto which they project their personal Eumenides, as Harry, in The Family Reunion, projects his fear of a past sequence of events onto an empty window. After they have projected their emotions it is not long till certain characters follow those emotions and begin playing a public role, as does Harry at the end of his agon, or Celia, in The Cocktail Party, at the end of hers.

Frequently the public space works in the plays through the public opinion of the newsmedia. Public opinion has almost divine power over those susceptible to it: for example, in The Family Reunion Harry's marriage to a socialite, against the wishes of his family and the traditions of his class, creates a great personal shame for the public conscience of his family, as also does the death

of that wife:

We didn't learn very much about the circumstances;
 We only knew what we read in the papers -
 Of course there was a great deal too much in the papers.
 Downing, do you think it might have been suicide,
 And that his Lordship knew it?

[I, 1, 485 - 489]

In the same play, Arthur tries to escape the personal torment of boredom by driving a car at high speeds down the public space of a well-known road. While he is driving, Arthur is in the space of sequential sensation described by Lewis, the world of cinematic escape - Sweeney's tropical island. However, Arthur is brought back to the Kantian, homogenized and isolated space of Ebury Street with a jolt, only to face the news media:

CHARLES [reads]

'Peer's Brother in Motor Smash'

'The Hon. Arthur Gerald Charles Piper, younger brother of Lord Monchensey, who ran into and demolished a roundsman's cart in Ebury Street early on the morning of January 1st, was fined 50 and costs to-day, and forbidden to drive a car for the next twelve months.
 'While trying to extricate his car from the collision, Mr. Piper reversed into a shop-window. When challenged, Mr. Piper said: "I thought it was all open country about here"-'

GERALD

Where?

CHARLES

In Ebury Street. 'The police stated that at the time of the accident Mr. Piper was being pursued by a patrol, and was travelling at the rate of 66 miles an hour. When asked why he did not stop when signalled by the police car, he said: "I thought you were having a game with me."'

GERALD

This is what the Communists make capital out of.

[II, 1, 401 - 417]

The communists' possible use of the media, in response to this original

offering of the media, makes the communists furies in Gerald's eyes, just as Harry's guilty fears become the Eumenides for him. Through such indirect intimidations the news media tend to play a very secretive, and, as it were, hidden role in Eliot's plays. Just as the viewer of a film is unaware of the colorless screen onto which the film is projected, so there is little direct reference to media in the plays. They are sensed through their effects on characters' emotions. They are indeed as unobtrusive as any servant - Downing, say, in The Family Reunion, or Eggerson in The Confidential Clerk. What Harry says to the members of The Family Reunion about their appearance to the outside world from the perspective of their front window expresses well the unspoken effect of the media in the plays:

How can you sit in this blaze of light for all
 the world to look at?
 If you knew how you looked, when I saw you through
 the window!
 Do you like to be stared at by eyes through a
 window?

[I,1,225 - 228]

Harry of course does not need the media as such to screen his projections; instead, he uses, like Arthur, the homogenized and isolated space of his surroundings, and, in particular, the front window of Wishwood House:

HARRY

No, no, not there. Look there!
 Can't you see them? You don't see them, but I see them,
 And they see me. This is the first time that I have seen
 them.
 In the Java Straits, in the Sunda Sea,
 In the sweet sickly tropical night, I knew they
 were coming.
 In Italy, from behind the nightingale's thicket,
 The eyes stared at me, and corrupted that song.

Behind the palm trees in the Grand Hotel
 They were always there. But I did not see them.
 Why should they wait until I came back to Wishwood?
 There were a thousand places where I might have
 met them!

Why here? why here?

Many happy returns of the day, mother.

[I,1,230 - 242]

Lord Claverton, in The Elder Statesman, unites both the mythic Eumenides and the surreptitious media as an object in his projected fear that his public image might be destroyed. That Eliot meant Claverton's pursuers to be seen in the light of the Eumenides has been strongly emphasized by Browne:

Eliot has introduced the Furies, who are off-stage in Sophocles and faceless and immobile in The Family Reunion, as fully active participants in the conflict. The Intruders, who as we have seen are an integral part of the play's original conception, are Claverton's pursuers and challengers. The sins which motivate their pursuit may seem in material terms to have done them more good than harm; but the criterion of judgement here is that of the effect upon the real personality, and by this measure, sin has been committed and confession is the only way out.³⁴

Claverton, like Harry, Lord Monchensey, is forced to make public, to confess events which he had tried to secrete in his personal, solitary space. The consequences of such confession in terms of the news media are immense for Claverton, since his one remaining glory in life is the reputation and the image with which he retired. He is only able to think well of himself because he has commanded extraordinary respect from other people. Claverton hides from the world behind his good name as he hides from Mrs. Carghill, herself a former celebrity, behind a newspaper. Claverton's son Michael is perhaps more aware of his father's public space than Claverton himself:

MICHAEL

He took the usual line,
 Just like the headmaster. And my tutor at Oxford.
 'Not what we expected from the son of your father'
 And that sort of thing. Its for your sake, he says,
 That he wants to keep things quiet. I can tell you,
 it's no joke
 Being the son of a famous public man.
 You don't know what I suffered, working in that office.
 In the first place, they all knew the job had been
 made for me
 Because I was your son. They considered me superfluous;
 They knew I couldn't be living on my pay;
 They had a lot of fun with me - sometimes they'd pretend
 That I was overworked, when I'd nothing to do.
 Even the office boys began to sneer at me.
 I wonder I stood it as long as I did.

[II, 499 - 512]

Again, like Harry, Claverton is incapable of peace until he reorients his life to a more substantial space, away from the illusions of fame projected on the public. Paradoxically, the substantial space, inner peace, is achieved by halting the flight and facing the projections. Eliot has suggested that this method of attaining peace applies to nations as well as individuals:

A nation's political structure affects its culture, and in turn is affected by that culture. But nowadays we take too much interest in each other's domestic politics, and at the same time have very little contact with each other's culture. The confusion of culture and politics may lead in two different directions. It may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or remould, every culture surrounding it. An error of the Germany of Hitler was to assume that every other culture than that of Germany was either decadent or barbaric. Let us have an end of such assumptions.³⁵

Public space is seen for what it is when it is relieved of the worship of glory. Under such conditions the general public (or for commerce, the mass market) is no longer an amorphous screen onto which to project images of greatness; but is rather, various groupings of human beings. When Claverton treats his pursuers as people rather than as

ghosts, his anxiety disappears:

LORD CLAVERTON

Because they are not real, Charles. They are merely ghosts:
Spectres from my past. They've always been with me
Though it was not till lately that I found the living persons
Whose ghosts tormented me, to be only human beings,
Malicious, petty, and I see myself emerging
From my spectral existence into something like reality.

[III, 99 - 104]

Emergence into reality, transcendence of self, awareness of the not-self, has - as many students of Eliot's training in philosophy are just now discovering - always been a key concept in the spatial mythology of Eliot. When as yet a virgin poet, Eliot expressed his awareness of the other in the Leibnitzian-Bradleyan terms already noted.³⁶ The simple public acknowledgement of another person's existence is an act of transcendence. It is therefore important that the channels of transcendence be kept open, and, be kept within a proper perspective at the same time:

[Another] direction in which the confusion of culture and politics may lead, is towards the ideal of a world state in which there will, in the end, be only one uniform world culture. I am not here criticising any schemes for world organisation. Such schemes belong to the plane of engineering, of devising machinery. Machinery is necessary, and the more perfect the machine the better. But culture is something that must grow; you cannot build a tree, you can only plant it, and care for it, and wait for it to mature in its due time; and when it is grown you must not complain if you find that from an acorn has come an oak, and not an elm tree. And a political structure is partly construction, and partly growth; partly machinery, and the same machinery, if good, is equally good for all peoples; and partly growing with and from the nation's culture.³⁷

The means by which the channels of transcendence are kept open and allowed a natural growth rather than a forced one, are the police. The police play a reasonably hidden role in the public space as do the media and the Eumenides. That some such police are needed to

establish spatial harmony is indicated, for instance by the presence of a policeman in The Family Reunion. Because this policeman, Winchell, is not allowed to play his proper role, spatial harmony is never established. Harry reveals the great importance of Winchell's role by confusing his own mother and wife when confronted by this image of conscience:

HARRY

Why do you keep asking
About her Ladyship? Do you know or don't you?
I'm not afraid of you.

WINCHELL

I should hope not, my Lord.
I didn't mean to put myself forward.
But you see, my Lord, I had good reason for asking . . .

HARRY

Well, do you want me to produce her for you?

WINCHELL

Oh no indeed, my Lord, I'd much rather not . . .

HARRY

You mean you think I can't. But I might surprise you;
I think I might be able to give you a shock.

[II, 1, 175 - 183]

The role of the police in society has of course been important to Eliot from the early days of his career. His short story, Eeldrop and Appleplex, is set in front of a police station, and describes two methods of character investigation. The artist, in effect, is seen as a kind of policeman. As well, the original title of The Wast Land - He Do The Police In Different Voices - not only underlines the artist (and therefore the audience) as policeman, it also emphasizes the conflict of conscience which dramatizes the poem. Further again, the personal detachment of the policeman (not unlike

that of the media or of the Eumenides) also relates to Eliot's theories about the depersonalisation of the artist, as Wyndham Lewis implied in Men without Art.³⁸ An extremely relevant, though somewhat questionable discussion of the police matter as it applies to Eliot's plays, and to The Family Reunion in particular, is provided by J. Isaacs:

. . . The shock here, in The Family Reunion, is the double irony, the dramatic irony of the figure of Sergeant Winchell, the policeman. Mr. Eliot in those days was a great amateur of the detective story - he even laid down a set of Aristotelian canons for its literary conduct, and the red-herring shock comes when the police sergeant enquires after the dead Lady Monchensey, but this is only a red herring. As Mr. Eliot writes in the play:

What we have written is not a story of detection
Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation.

I think that here Mr. Eliot, who was a close student of Dostoevsky, is pointing out that the English title, Crime and Punishment, does not represent the theme of Dostoevsky's novel, and that Sin and Expiation, which comes out more clearly in the German title, Schuld und Sühne, is much closer.³⁹

Isaac's distinction of titles, as well as his attribution to Eliot of lines spoken by Eliot's characters may well be red herrings themselves (it is for instance, Agatha's subjective involvement with Harry that prevents her from realizing that crime, sin, punishment and expiation are all non-detachable components of one process), but his remarks nevertheless provide valuable information about Eliot as detective. As will be seen later, the identification of Eliot with Reilly and Sweeney Agonistes reveals the importance of the police in a diseased society. It may perhaps be said that Eliot deliberately chose for himself the role of policeman of the arts, and consequently set about to maintain an impeccable public image as distinct from his more private

and possibly more devious self. Such a theory may explain his insistence on maturity and common sense in the work and emotional attitudes of the poet.

Indeed, the police in Eliot's plays are a living objectification of common sense. A policeman pounds his beat. He patrols an area, much as Eliot patrolled bomb-torn London and reported his experience in "Little Gidding". Just as a policeman's job is a spatial one, a job of guarding an area, so Eliot's London patrol takes on a peculiar spatial dimension by being outside of time and place:

And so, compliant to the common wind,
Too strange to each other for misunderstanding,
In concord at this intersection time
Of meeting nowhere, no before and after,
We trod the pavement in a dead patrol.⁴⁰

Unlike the news media and the furies who, though unobtrusive like the police, give the public space of the secular dramas an active quality by looking into other people's affairs, the police are passively unobtrusive. They provide a restraining wall to absorb the difficulties which come looking for them. The police are, in other words, public servants, and function unobtrusively as servants. Indeed, so unobtrusive are the police that it is probably more appropriate to say that the servants are the police. Sergeant Winchell of The Family Reunion indicates just how reticent and simply environmental the police are. It is interesting that he is closely enough associated with the fog as to be a part of it:

WINCHELL

Yes, my Lord, I'm sorry.
I thought I'd better have a word with you quiet,

Rather than phone and perhaps disturb her Ladyship.
 So I slipped along on my bike. Mostly walking,
 What with the fog so thick, or I'd have been here sooner.
 I'd telephoned to Dr. Warburton's,
 And they told me he was here, and that you'd arrived.
 Mr. John's had a bit of an accident
 On the West Road, in the fog, coming along
 At a pretty smart pace, I fancy, ran into a lorry
 Drawn up round the bend. We'll have the driver up for this:
 Says he doesn't know this part of the country
 And stopped to take his bearings. We've got him at the Arms-
 Mr. John, I mean.

[II, 1, 188 - 200]

Common sense is, naturally, the policeman's stock in trade.
 In a sense the policeman is simply a servant who dispenses common
 sense in so far as the public conduct of those whom he guards is
 concerned. Harry's servant, Downing, in The Family Reunion, provides
 a typical example of common sense in his description of Harry's late
 wife:

CHARLES

I understand, Downing. Was she in good spirits?

DOWNING

Well, always about the same, Sir.
 What I mean is, always up and down.
 Down in the morning, and up in the evening,
 And then she used to get rather excited,
 And, in a way, irresponsible, Sir.
 If I may make so bold, Sir,
 I always thought that a very few cocktails
 Went a long way with her Ladyship.
 She wasn't one of those that are designed for drinking:
 It's natural for some and unnatural for others.

[I, 1, 500 - 510]

Downing is, of course, a proto-type for the title character in
The Confidential Clerk (Eggerson) who is a master at maintaining, in
 an unobtrusive way, law and order in a scatter-brained household.
The Confidential Clerk, if it is anything, is an exploration of the

policing role, and of what is required to maintain an effective but not dominant machinery of order in the public space.

It would be a sad error to mistake what Eliot means by confidential in The Confidential Clerk. As Eggerson makes clear at the outset, confidential indicates confidence rather than simple personal intimacy; and confidence requires what is needed in any good policeman, a sound footing, a control over space:

EGGERSON

Oh, Sir Claude, you shouldn't say that!
Mr. Simpkins is far better qualified that I was
To be your confidential clerk.
He was finding his feet, very quickly,
During the time we worked together.
All he needs is confidence.

[I, 25 - 30]

Or, again, as Eggerson's line, "I've done my best to gain his confidence" [I, 109], intimates, the policeman is a confidence man, someone who commands instinctive trust. The policeman, because of his own self-confidence, inspires confidence in others. At the same time, in order to have confidence, the policeman must know his territory thoroughly, including all the little side streets and all the inhabitants. This is, to be sure, a kind of personal intimacy, but not intimacy for its own sake, as in the diary, nor for exploitation, as in the case of the human furies of The Elder Statesman or of the news media but for the sake of protecting the individuals whom the intimacy concerns. The confidence man offers protection, as the following duet between two such men in The Confidential Clerk makes quite evident:

EGGERSON

Oh yes, Mr. Kaghan is very good company.
 He makes me laugh sometimes. I don't laugh easily.
 Quite a humourist, he is. In fact, Mrs. E.
 Sometimes says to me: 'Eggerson, why can't you make me laugh
 The way B. Kaghan did?' She's only met him once;
 But do you know, he began addressing her as Muriel-
 Within the first ten minutes! I was horrified.
 But she actually liked it. Muriel is her name.
 He has a way with the ladies, you know.
 But with Lady Elizabeth he wasn't so successful.
 But with you, as I said, it will be very different.
 She'll see at once that you're a man of culture;
 And besides, she's very musical.

COLBY

Thank you for the warning!

EGGERSON

So if you don't mind, I shall mention at once
 That you are a musician.

COLBY

I'll be on my guard.

[I, 222 - 237]

Such intimacy is only of value to the policeman if he respects those about whom he has personal knowledge. If he does not respect them, he can have no motivation for protecting them. By respecting them he also inspires them to respect themselves. As a policeman, himself a loyal subject of the crown, respects his fellow subjects, so Eggerson, himself a kind-hearted person, inspires a like attitude in those whom he protects:

COLBY

Everybody seems to be kind-hearted.
 But there's one thing I do believe, Mr. Eggerson:
 That you have a kind heart. And I'm convinced
 That you always contrive to think the best of everyone.

[I, 428 - 431]

Perhaps the final point about police space is the necessary detachment of the policeman from his own personal affairs while on duty.

In The Confidential Clerk this separation is expressed in terms of Eggerson's private life at Joshua Park and his public life working for Sir Claude. Eggerson himself probably doesn't realise the extent of this separation until after he retires:

EGGERSON

Don't say that, Sir Claude.
 It's true, I haven't much nowadays to bring me;
 But Mrs. E. wishes I'd come up oftener!
 Isn't that like the ladies! She used to complain
 At my being up in London five or six days a week:
 But now she says: 'You're becoming such a countryman!
 You're losing touch with public affairs.'
 The fact is, she misses the contact with London,
 Though she doesn't admit it. She misses my news
 When I came home in the evening. And the late editions
 Of the papers that I picked up at Liverpool Street.
 But I've so much to do, in Joshua Park-
 Apart from the garden - that I've not an idle moment.
 And really, now, I'm quite lost in London.
 Every time I come, I notice the traffic
 Has got so much worse.

[III, 114 - 128]

Detachment for the police-servant of the public space is not, however, a mere matter of living apart as in the over-simplified situation of Eggerson. Detachment lies at the very root of spatial order and the boundaries between public and private space. Through detachment the police-servant can maintain his public position no matter how deeply he becomes concerned in private affairs. It is the maintenance of this public relationship which is a key issue in that most public of private events, The Cocktail Party.

In The Cocktail Party the public space is protected by what Edward Chamberlayne speaks of as:

. . . the obstinate, the tougher self; who does not speak,
 Who never talks, who cannot argue;
 And who in some men may be the guardian-

But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,
 The indomitable spirit of mediocrity.
 The willing self can contrive the disaster
 Of this unwilling partnership - but can only flourish
 In submission to the rule of the stronger partner.

[I, ii, 255 - 262]

Such guardians are Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly - the unidentified guest, Julia Shuttlethwaite, and Edward MacColgie Gibbs. These three, not altogether unlike the witches in Macbeth, operate as a unit. They are, however, a police force of a very special kind. Like Interpol they have world-wide connections - Gibbs functions almost like an elaborate teletype system. At the same time they have an intimate familiarity with any area of concern as the most adept con-man might have; to wit - Julia's encyclopedic knowledge of who is related to whom. Because of their special training this trinity is obviously not simply a group of patrolmen. Like the media and the furies, Reilly, Shuttlethwaite and Gibbs are capable of positive action. If Eggerson is a patrolman, these three are detectives. Like detectives they have an intimate knowledge of the criminal process without being criminals. The justification for their more active police role lies in the fact that a criminal is one who has violated spatial boundaries and has therefore abrogated his right to the spatial integrity of a loyal subject. These detectives therefore have a special warrant to search. (Perhaps an example of this warrant taken to an extreme might be Ian Fleming's James Bond, who has a licence to kill.) This warrant constitutes a very delicate privilege which must be used with the utmost discretion. Only once does Eliot show its exercise on stage:

REILLY

You might say, a long journey.
But before I can treat a patient like yourself
I need to know a great deal more about him,
Than the patient himself can always tell me.
Indeed, it is often the case that my patients
Are only pieces of a total situation
Which I have to explore. The single patient
Who is ill by himself, is rather the exception.
I have recently had another patient
Whose situation is much the same as your own.
You must accept a rather unusual procedure:
I propose to introduce you to the other patient.

EDWARD

What do you mean? Who is this other patient?
I consider this very unprofessional conduct-
I will not discuss my case before another patient.

REILLY

On the contrary. That is the only way
In which it can be discussed. You have told me nothing.
You have had the opportunity, and you have said enough
To convince me that you have been making up your case
So to speak, as you went along. A barrister
Ought to know his brief before he enters the court.

EDWARD

I am at least free to leave. And I propose to do so.
My mind is made up. I shall go to a hotel.

REILLY

It is just because you are not free, Mr. Chamberlayne
That you have come to me. It is for me to give you that-
Your freedom. That is my affair.
But here is the other patient.

EDWARD

Lavinia!

LAVINIA

Well, Sir Henry!
I said I would come to talk about my husband:
I didn't say I was prepared to meet him.

EDWARD

And I did not expect to meet you, Lavinia.
I call this a very dishonourable trick.

REILLY

Honesty before honour, Mr. Chamberlayne.

Later, in the same conversation, Reilly again emphasizes that his intrusion is warranted by saying, "You have come where the word 'insult' has no meaning;/ And you must put up with that". Insult means, when it has a meaning, invasion.

Although Shuttlethwaite and Gibbs are active police-servants, their actions seem to be only tributary to the main gestures which are Reilly's. It is therefore extremely important to understand exactly what kind of spatial manifestation Reilly is. In a sense he is the archetypal servant of the public space. Reilly's capacity for detachment is greatly underlined by the fact that he is a doctor. As a medical doctor can see the disease in isolation from the patient, or as the surgeon can cut open a living man without emotion, so Reilly separates the crime from the criminal. Reilly hints at this ability of his when he, as the anonymous guest, distinguishes the body from its consciousness:

UNIDENTIFIED GUEST

Yes, it's unfinished;
 And nobody likes to be left with a mystery.
 But there's more to it than that. There's a loss of personality;
 Or rather, you've lost touch with the person
 You thought you were. You no longer feel quite human.
 You're suddenly reduced to the status of an object -
 A living object, but no longer a person.
 It's always happening, because one is an object
 As well as a person. But we forget about it
 As quickly as we can. When you've dressed for a party
 And are going downstairs, with everything about you
 Arranged to support you in the role you have chosen,
 Then sometimes, when you come to the bottom step
 There is one step more than your feet expected
 And you come down with a jolt. Just for a moment
 You have the experience of being an object
 At the mercy of a malevolent staircase.
 Or, take a surgical operation.
 In consultation with the doctor and the surgeon,
 In going to bed in the nursing home,

In talking to the matron, you are still the subject,
 The centre of reality. But, stretched on the table,
 You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop
 For those who surround you, the masked actors;
 All there is of you is your body
 And the 'you' is withdrawn.

[I, 1, 309 - 334]

While Reilly's detachment, no doubt, had an intellectual source in Eliot's thinking about the depersonalization of the artist, Reilly himself probably had more concrete and dramatic forbearers:

That the Fool and the comic servant are akin, is suggested by cases where the supernatural power and the servant are separated: the powers remain with Faustus and Friar Bacon, the comedy resides in their servants. Here there is no complete Fool, but a part of him is a comic servant. The proto-type of the true Fool, according to my conjecture, is a character in that English version of the Perseus legend, the Mummers' Play of St. George and the Dragon. The Doctor who restores St. George to life is, I understand, usually presented as a comic character. As Mr. Cornford suggests, in "The Origin of Attic Comedy", this Doctor may be identical with the Doctor who is called in to assist Punch after he has been thrown by his horse.⁴¹

Cornford indicated just how extensive a figure the doctor has cut in western tribal culture:

In the English Mummers' Play the resurrection of St. George, foully slain by the Turkish Knight, is effected by the Noble Doctor, who can cure

'All sorts of diseases,
 Whatever you pleases.'

The same figure appears in the northern Greek folk-plays and in similar performances in Germany and elsewhere. The Doctor in Aristophanes' Plutus is no less a person than Asclepius, the God of Medicine himself, who was slain by the thunder of Zeus for raising the dead to life. He is not, of course, a character in the play; but Plutus recovers his sight at his temple.⁴²

Cornford also went on to mention "the allied figure of the Cook, who performs upon the hero of the Knights a magical ceremony of rejuvenation".⁴³

The universality of the Doctor-Cook figure as saviour of the public space (as well as his importance in the work of Aristophanes)

has special relevance to Eliot's satiric use of Aristophanes.

Sweeney, the public saviour in Eliot's "Aristophanic Melodrama" is, whatever else, a cook:

SWEENEY

I'll convert you!

Into a stew.

A nice little, white little, missionary stew.

DORIS

You wouldn't eat me.

SWEENEY

Yes I'd eat you!

A nice little, white little, soft little, tender little,
Juicy little, right little, missionary stew.

You see this egg

You see this egg

Well that's life on a crocodile isle.⁴⁴

As cook, Sweeney could well be expected to have some relation to

Harcourt-Reilly of The Cocktail Party, and indeed such is the case.

For one thing, while Sweeney threatens to convert Doris into a

"missionary stew" Reilly is actually instrumental in the conversion of

Celia into a martyred missionary. For another thing, the foregoing

correlation is confirmed by letters of Eliot and Wyndham Lewis. The

first of the two letters involved lays open the connection between

Reilly himself and Eliot as the poet of the impersonal. The image of

naval ordnance mounted on a Thames houseboat emphasizes, among many

other more hidden obfuscations, the public nature of the whole perform-

ance:

12th March, 1950

My dear Eliot. It was very kind of you to send me a copy of "The Cocktail Party." I have now read it with great care and with unusual interest. I have seen it objected that your use of so popular a figure as the Mental Doctor was bad form, but for my part I was rejoiced to meet you disguised as a psychopathic quack. About half way through I

decided that it was in the nature of a large naval gun mounted on a Thames houseboat of shallow draught. This of course might strike one as inartistic. But later on I learned that the big gun was part of the fixtures of the houseboat: and my last glimpse of this heavy ordnance was its festive departure in the company of Julia (of Mrs. Porter's family I surmise) to other cocktail parties. - That it is a success as a play (and I wouldn't know about that) is demonstrated by its tremendous reception in New York. You will I expect be responsible for the death of a number of libidinous Yankee damsels, for surely U.S. Psychologists will not be slow to take the hint and will dispatch the more dewy-eyed of their patients where they may be swallowed by alligators or pecked to death by vicious tropical birds. - As I went along, I felt that quite apart from the question involved in the blood-sacrifice, there was much highly interesting material being used in connection with the adulterous couple, who were inadequate vessels but it could with advantage be drawn on for another play; not exactly a comedy. - I congratulate you on your work and its great success in the U.S. This success will, I hope, be repeated here in London.

Yours ever,
W.L. 45

Eliot's reply indicates with what relish Eliot enjoyed a response to his play which recognized the play's satiric nature rather than a response which simply heaped peons of praise that overflowed from some self-induced religious orgasm. At the same time Eliot allowed Reilly and Sweeney to be connected without denying the connection of either with himself:

Faber and Faber Limited
24 Russell Square London W.C.1
13 March 1950

My dear Wyndham,

You are quite right - no one else has yet remarked that Julia is a niece of Mrs. Porter, and that Reilly's mother was a Sweeney (but no doubt James J. Sweeney will be looking into the matter). Possibly the houseboat is a Mississippi houseboat-

Down the Mississippi, Baby, we will float along;
In our little houseboat, maybe, life's one grand sweet song.

I await statistics of the self-immolation of young women from the Long Island suburbs.

Yours ever,
T.S.E. 46

The association of cook and blood sacrifice, of doctor and disease, of disease and crime-detection, with the figure of Reilly outlines the boundaries of the public space. The various cinematic projections across the boundaries of private and personal space into the public space can be considered a kind of criminal disease. Agnes, in Edward Albee's A Delicate Balance, discusses the nature of this disease as a trespassing of spatial boundaries which converts what could be two harmonious private spaces into a private space versus a public one:

AGNES

Yes: the terror. Or the plague - they're both the same. Edna and Harry have come to us - dear friends, our very best, though there's a judgement to be made about that, I think - have come to us and brought the plague. Now, poor Tobias has sat up all night and wrestled with the moral problem.

TOBIAS

I've not been ... wrestling with some ... abstract problem! These are people! Harry and Edna! These are our friends, God damn it!

AGNES

Yes, but they've brought the plague with them, and that's another matter. Let me tell you something about disease ... mortal illness; you either are immune to it ... or you fight it. If you are immune, you wade right in, you treat the patient until he either lives, or dies of it. But if you are not immune, you risk infection. Ten centuries ago - and even less - the treatment was quite simple ... burn them. Burn their bodies, burn their houses, burn their clothes - and move to another town, if you were enlightened. But now, with modern medicine, we merely isolate; we quarantine, we ostracize - if we are not immune ourselves, or unless we are saints. So, your night-long vigil, darling, your reasoning in the cold, pure hours, has been over the patient, and not the illness. It is not Edna and Harry who have come to us - our friends - it is a disease.⁴⁷

While the problem of projections as mental illness is an important concern of The Cocktail Party, the actual image of disease is, strangely enough, not focused on. The Family Reunion, in which all the images of health, security and order are submerged in the background,

provides the major image of disease. The primary characteristic of disease is, of course, that it knows no boundaries. The "cancer" as Harry describes it, crosses the boundaries of personal space (conscience), and of private space (the attempts of friends and relatives to understand and sympathise) into the public space (the Eumenides):

It goes a good deal deeper
 Than what people call their conscience; it is just the cancer
 That eats away the self. I knew how you would take it.
 First of all, you isolate the single event
 As something so dreadful that it couldn't have happened,
 Because you could not bear it. So you must believe
 That I suffer from delusions. It is not my conscience,
 Not my mind, that is diseased, but the world I have to live in.
 - I lay two days in contented drowsiness;
 Then I recovered. I am afraid of sleep:
 A condition in which one can be caught for the last time.
 And also waking. She is nearer than ever.
 The contamination has reached the marrow
 And they are always near. Here, nearer than ever.
 They are very close here. I had not expected that.

[I, 1, 358 - 372]

The characteristic of disease as cutting across spatial boundaries justifies the presence, in The Cocktail Party, of a figure like Reilly who also has the licence to cross boundaries, in order, however, to cure the disease. The diseased person or criminal, as mentioned above, forfeits his rights to spatial integrity. Indeed he has destroyed his own spatial boundaries through his transgressions of the boundaries of others. Eliot described how such a self-destruction was taking place in the modern world:

It would perhaps be more natural, as well as in better conformity with the Will of God, if there were more celibates and if those who were married had larger families. But I am thinking of 'conformity to nature' in a wider sense than this. We are being made aware that the organisation of society on the principle of private profit, as well as public destruction, is leading both to the deformation of humanity by unregulated industrialism, and to the exhaustion of natural resources, and that a good deal of our material progress is progress for which

succeeding generations may have to pay dearly. I need only mention, as an instance now very much before the public eye, the results of 'soil-erosion' - the exploitation of the earth, on a vast scale for two generations, for commercial profit: immediate benefits leading to dearth and desert. I would not have it thought that I condemn a society because of its material ruin, for that would be to make its material success a sufficient test of its excellence; I mean only that a wrong attitude towards nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude towards God, and that the consequence is an inevitable doom.⁴⁸

Eliot did not, of course, raise the problem of the destruction of spatial boundaries without suggesting some form of solution. On the theoretical level, his primary answer, as might be expected, was the Church:

I have maintained that the idea of a Christian society implies, for me, the existence of one Church which shall aim at comprehending the whole nation. Unless it has this aim, we relapse into that conflict between citizenship and church-membership, between public and private morality, which to-day makes moral life so difficult for everyone, and which in turn provokes that craving for a simplified, monistic solution of statism or racism which the National Church can only combat if it recognises its position as a part of the Universal Church.⁴⁹

On the artistic level Eliot objectified the ritual of cure as a single force only once, in the person of Reilly. Reilly is, as both the play and the Eliot-Lewis correspondence indicate, something more than, or beyond a reality. In the other neutralistic dramas the transgression of spatial rights through inter-personal projections is made to reach some kind of resolution through more apparently real rituals which are objectified by a concert of persons. This concert ritual will become more readily perceivable after an examination of the private and personal spaces of the plays. The discussion of the private space which follows will deal with that space as it occurs in the four urban moralities, taking each play in the order of its composition.

The private space, or as Eliot calls it, the "private social

world", is the most apparent space in Eliot's urban drama. It is the cut-away drawing room around which realistic theatre of the Shaftesbury Avenue make has centred itself. The key-hole which served the servants so well has been enlarged for the public in general. Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov, O'Neill and Strindberg have, so to speak, perpetrated the biggest expose in history, and Eliot has come along to pick up the pieces and perhaps restore some privacy to the drawing room. With the completion of The Elder Statesman in which public confession by the central criminal obviates the need for detection or for key-hole peeping, there is no longer anything which the cut-away drawing room can reveal, for there is no longer anything to hide. The devil of curiosity has had his rebuff. The privacy of the private social world and the personal solitary world can not be exposed for they are no longer worlds of appearance.

The key characteristic of the private space of Eliot's drama is the interpenetration of two or more such spaces that are hostile to each other. It is as if, where there is only one drawing room, there is need of several. Thus Harry in The Family Reunion brings the private space of himself and his late wife into the drawing room of his parental private space. Because the two spaces are much like each other and reveal each other's faults, they are hostile to each other. The basic fault revealed is, again, the disease of transgression of spatial boundaries. Harry's desire to do his wife in is reflected in his father's desire to do the same to Amy, Lady Monchensey - Harry's mother. These original transgressions lead to multiple series of others, but particularly to Amy's desire to manipulate Harry (as well as the rest of the family) and to stop time (much as Miss Havisham tries to do

in Dickens's Great Expectations). Harry, the wandering Orestian "spirit unappeased and peregrine" is then caught "Between two worlds become much like each other".⁵⁰ The hostile similarity of Harry's private space to that of his father, which Harry invades, reflects the similar confusion of realities in Eliot's primitive attempt to create a private space in Sweeney Agonistes, a play in which the Orestian situation also figures:

SWEENEY

I knew a man once did a girl in
 Any man might do a girl in
 Any man has to, needs to, wants to
 Once in a lifetime, do a girl in.
 Well he kept her there in a bath
 With a gallon of lysol in a bath

 He didn't know if he was alive and the girl was dead
 He didn't know if the girl was alive and he was dead
 He didn't know if they both were alive or both were dead
 If he was alive then the milkman wasn't
 and the rent collector wasn't
 And if they were alive then he was dead.
 There wasn't any joint
 There wasn't any joint
 For when you're alone like he was alone
 You're either or neither⁵¹

The spatial conflict is resolved through an examination of the original parental space which is also diseased. Harry's father was, like Harry, attempting to maintain a double space, one with Amy, and one with Agatha, Amy's sister. Harry himself was used as an instrument by both women to resolve the spatial conflict. This role, having been imposed on him before birth, determines his life, and until he can accept the fact he can not live in peace:

AGATHA

It is possible that you have not known what sin
 You shall expiate, or whose, or why. It is certain

That the knowledge of it must precede the expiation.
 It is possible that sin may strain and struggle
 In its dark instinctive birth, to come to consciousness
 And so find expurgation. It is possible
 You are the consciousness of your unhappy family.
 Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
 Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
 Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
 To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.

HARRY

Look, I do not know why,
 I feel happy for a moment, as if I had come home.
 It is quite irrational, but now
 I feel quite happy, as if happiness
 Did not consist in getting what one wanted
 Or in getting rid of what can't be got rid of
 But in a different vision. This is like an end.

[II, 2, 132 - 149]

The Cocktail Party presents a series of horizontal private spaces (as opposed to the vertical or descending spaces of The Family Reunion) all vying for the same drawing room: Edward and Lavinia, Edward and Celia, Lavinia and Peter, Peter and Celia. The spatial struggle is resolved by the revelation of each of the spaces to the others. The private space shared by Reilly, Shuttlethwaite, and Gibbs, a private space of a superior kind, is one of the few examples in Eliot's work of a truly healthy set of relationships. The relaxed friendly atmosphere of these people radiates an innocent playfulness which tends to soothe and make bearable the diseased condition, or at least the scars, of the others. The harmony of this healthy space also allows an extraordinary degree of spatial movement. These people have, as it were, a complete freedom that verges on freedom from physical limitations. Their ability to see everything at once, a correlative of their ability to be anywhere at any time, makes it possible for them to manipulate the diseased spaces into some acceptable form of health

without hurting anyone. These three characters, indeed, form an ideal nucleus for what Eliot called his community of Christians. Of particular importance is the fact that in their presence misdemeanors are indeed reduced to the "form of wrong relations between one person and another". Human actions can consequently be rendered in properly dramatic terms rather than as the outcome of vague impersonal forces. Reilly, Shuttlethwaite, and Gibbs may not, as Eliot planned for his community of Christians, live close to the soil; but they do live in an intimate harmony such as is commonly associated with people close to the land:

I am not presenting any idyllic picture of the rural parish, either present or past, in taking as a norm, the idea of a small and mostly self-contained group attached to the soil and having its interests centred in a particular place, with a kind of unity which may be designed, but which also has to grow through generations. It is the idea, or ideal, of a community small enough to consist of a nexus of direct personal relationships, in which all iniquities and turpitudes will take the simple and easily appreciable form of wrong relations between one person and another. But at present not even the smallest community, unless so primitive as to present objectionable features of another kind, is so simplified as this; and I am not advocating any complete reversion to any earlier state of things, real or idealised. The example appears to offer no solution to the problem of industrial, urban and suburban life which is that of the majority of the population.⁵²

The private space of The Confidential Clerk is a basically integral space, but it suffers from the side effects of previous private relationships and seems unable to establish a descendent private space for itself and on its own terms. However, through the surprising discovery about the parentage of B. Kaghan, a vertically descending spatial order is established. The Confidential Clerk in effect comes close to being Eliot's topia for it presents a system in which a complex system of private spaces manage more or less to fit together.

It is not surprising, then, that Eliot should have expressed an unusual affection for the characters of this play:

I was pleased and proud to learn that my play The Confidential Clerk was to be performed at the Linz English Week. I never ask myself the question which of my plays I like the best, but I have definite feelings about my characters. By the time any play of mine is finished and produced, I have had to live with the personages in it for two or three years. The Confidential Clerk stands out for me among my plays, by the fact that I have always felt an affectionate sympathy with all the personages in it. I hope that the theatregoers of the Linz English Week will regard these emissaries of mine with benevolence; and I should be happy if they could regard them also as friends.

With this hope they come to greet you - all seven of them.⁵³

Unlike The Family Reunion or The Cocktail Party which both resolve antecedent situations, The Confidential Clerk begins with the beginning of a situation: Sir Claude Mulhammer intends to trick his wife into accepting Colby Simpkins as both an acceptable confidential clerk and eventually as an adopted son. In doing so Claude is upsetting his own private space with his wife, as well as Colby's with his unknown parents. At the same time Claude is neglecting to stabilize the place of his daughter, Lucasta Angel, within his own private space. She is, consequently, unstable, or as her name suggests, "flighty" [I, 338]. Claude's motives for deception are, however, motives of love; they are such that he is hardly aware of the transgression of spatial boundaries involved in his manipulation. Because he is motivated by love, all his desires for the other characters are more than fulfilled, while only his own desire for a son remains unanswered. As Claude wishes, B. Kaghan becomes an integral part of Claude's private space through the discovery that Lady Elizabeth, Claude's wife, is also Kaghan's mother. This same discovery makes possible the stability needed by Lucasta, for she is engaged to Kaghan. Colby, by adopting Mr. and Mrs.

Eggerson as his parents, fulfills their need for a substitute for their lost son. In finding for himself such a set of parents, Colby also fulfills the desires which his real but estranged mother (Mrs. Guzzard) had for him, and, at the same time, fulfills his own desire to follow in the footsteps of his real, but deceased father as a good, unsuccessful musician. He, in effect, establishes a post-mortem private space with that father. As in the other plays, the establishment of a healthy set of spaces depends on the revelation of the unhealthy, concealed ones.

Eliot's observation that "It is unfortunate for a man when his friends and his business associates are two unrelated groups; it is also narrowing when they are one and the same group"⁵⁴ succinctly describes the basic spatial problems of The Elder Statesman. Lord Claverton suffers, in a way, from both these extremes of human relationship. His life as a public man has caused a complete split between his private space - his family life, and particularly his relationship with his daughter - and his duties as a Peer. His retirement, however, leaves him with only his private space and an empty appointment book. The resulting demands on his daughter as a full-time companion are as bad for him as they are unfair to her. Such a set of conditions allows for little novelty. This private space is basically empty and frustrated, and as a result an extreme depression sets in, which in turn results in a period in a rest home.

There are, of course, reasons why the Claverton space is so unsatisfactory, and these are basically Federico Gomez and Mrs. Carghill - two diseased private spaces of Claverton's past which could not be

revealed to his wife and which consequently poisoned the legitimate private space of his family:

LORD CLAVERTON

Your mother knew nothing about them. And I know
That I never knew your mother, as she never knew me.
I thought that she would never understand
Or that she would be jealous of the ghosts who haunted me.
And I'm still of that opinion. How open one's heart
When one is sure of the wrong response?
How make a confession with no hope of absolution?
It was not her fault. We never understood each other.
And so we lived, with a deep silence between us,
And she died silently. She had nothing to say to me.
I think of your mother, when she lay dying:
Completely without interest in the life that lay behind her
And completely indifferent to whatever lay ahead of her.

[III, 107 - 119]

The disease of these spaces is cured by their revelation to Monica. The cure itself sets in motion a process of healthy understanding which causes Claverton to recognize the true private space of his daughter and her fiancé:

LORD CLAVERTON

It is worth while dying, to find out what life is.
And I love you, my daughter, the more truly for knowing
That there is someone you love more than your father-
That you love and are loved.

[III, 532 - 535]

The Monica - Charles relationship in The Elder Statesman is another of the rare examples of a healthy private space in Eliot's work. It is an endangered space partly because of Monica's exaggerated relationship with her father, and partly because Monica and Charles are amateurs at an art which is not solidly reinforced in the society of their time. As Martin Browne points out, their condition reflects Eliot's own at the time Eliot was writing the play:

. . . Eliot took a step which entirely altered his life: on 10 January 1957 he married Valerie Fletcher. She had been his secretary for seven years, and had cared both for him and for his affairs during his various periods in hospital. She brought him a happiness which he had never experienced and found almost unbelievable; and it was a great joy to us to visit them, when we returned from New York, in a home which was a haven after his life of storm and loneliness. It was there that I first discussed with him the play which was now called The Elder Statesman. His new-found happiness was already reflecting itself in the play. The relationship between Charles and Monica had hardly been defined; their only scene in The Rest Cure had concerned itself solely with Claverton. Now, they were to have a series of scenes in the first and last Acts, in which their love for each other was to be dramatised. This proved a difficult task. Such a development was to the advantage of the play, since it rounded out the character of the daughter on whose compassion rested Claverton's achievement of final peace and provided a more vocal opposition to the Intruders. But it had not been envisaged in the original plan - there is no trace of it in the synopses. And Eliot himself was as yet an amateur in happiness. While there are occasional lines which distil the essence of fresh love in a fashion reminiscent of The Tempest, the scenes do not flow with professional ease. More re-writing and cutting went on here than in any other part of the play. It was an area of the writer's world in which this most exact and experienced of writers was quite inexperienced. And the fight to find words which Eliot had so persistently carried on all his life is, as he has Charles put it, part of the battle for love:

It's strange that words are so inadequate.
Yet, like the asthmatic struggling for breath,
So the lover must struggle for words.⁵⁵

Inexperienced in love as he may have been, Eliot nevertheless found a method of expressing the secret of a healthy private space, and that secret lies in the interpenetration, willed on both sides, of two healthy personal spaces. The interpenetration is such that a virtually distinct and new person is created:

MONICA

I can't understand his going for a walk.

CHARLES

He wanted to leave us alone together!

MONICA

Yes, he wanted to leave us along together.
And yet, Charles, though we've been alone to-day
Only a few minutes, I've felt all the time . . .

CHARLES

I know what you're going to say!
We were alone together, in some mysterious fashion,
Even with Michael, and despite those people,
Because somehow we'd begun to belong together,
And that awareness . . .

MONICA

Was a shield protecting both of us . . .

CHARLES

So that now we are conscious of a new person
Who is you and me together.
Oh my dear,
I love you to the limits of speech, and beyond.

[III, 555 - 568]

The healthy private space, while depending initially on two healthy personal spaces, transforms those spaces with a life-giving radiance which some may well want to liken to grace. Perhaps the radiance, which itself transcends the boundaries of personal, private, and public spaces is the correspondingly healthy use of that faculty which, in the form of selfish projection, transgresses the various spaces. Eliot's dedication of the play to his wife provides both a demonstration of the nature of this radiance and at the same time a final justification of the validity of a spatial interpretation of his plays:

A DEDICATION TO MY WIFE

To whom I owe the leaping delight
That quickens my senses in our waking time
And the rhythm that governs the repose of our sleeping time,
The breathing in unison

Of lovers whose bodies smell of each other
Who think the same thoughts without need of speech
And babble the same speech without need of meaning.

No peevish winter wind shall chill
 No sullen tropic sun shall wither
 The roses in the rose-garden which is ours and ours only

But this dedication is for others to read:
 These are private words addressed to you in public.⁵⁶

As Eliot's final lines to his wife indicate, part of the secret of the transcending radiance of the healthy private space is its almost automatic, but magnanimously insistent recognition of spatial boundaries. The radiance is a kind of radar, as Monica and Charles demonstrate before anything happens in The Elder Statesman:

CHARLES

Your words seem to come
 From very far away. Yet very near. You are changing me
 And I am changing you.

MONICA

Already
 How much of me is you?

CHARLES

And how much of me is you?
 I'm not the same person as a moment ago.
 What do the words mean now - I and you?

MONICA

In our private world - now we have our private world-
 The meanings are different. Look! We're back in the room
 That we entered only a few moments ago.
 Here's an armchair, there's the table;
 There's the door . . . and I hear someone coming:
 It's Lambert with the tea . . .
 [Enter LAMBERT with trolley]

and I shall say, 'Lambert,
 Please let his lordship know that tea is waiting'.

LAMBERT

Yes, Miss Monica.

MONICA

I'm very glad, Charles,
 That you can stay to tea.

[Exit LAMBERT]

- Now we're in the public world.

[I, 70 - 84]

The third person which a healthy private space becomes is perhaps a fitting point of departure for an exploration of personal space. The healthy private space as a unity becomes in a sense an objectification of that unification of individual (and of world) which was so important to Eliot. The clue, of course, lies in Eliot's assurance to his wife of "The roses in the rose-garden which is ours and ours only". There is a mutual harmony between the roses of publicity, of privacy and of personality. Ultimately the terms of the rose-garden are the only terms of the personal space.

The rose as a symbol has of course received much attention from Eliot's critics, but the rose-garden, as a physical, spatial entity seems to have been somewhat neglected, and perhaps not without some justification. Were one to trace the garden symbol as it has developed through Eliot's work one might well run into an endless series of red-herring connections, all the way from that "corpse you planted last year in your garden,/ Has it begun to sprout?"⁵⁷ to the condition "when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing".⁵⁸ The garden in a sense has as many dimensions as consciousness itself. What Helen Gardner says of "Burnt Norton" in general, can more accurately be applied specifically to the rose-garden:

This is a poem about the 'private world' of each one of us, the world in which what might have been persists in the consciousness as well as what was, and in which the life that was actually lived by unknown people in a strange house is less real than the life we might have lived there ourselves, with our own family, if things had been different. This 'private world', so intensely real to each of us individually, can hardly be communicated; it lies deep beneath the personality which others know. The difficulty of communication is reflected in the uncertain use of the personal pronouns.⁵⁹

If, as George Williamson observes, "Other echoes besides the footfalls inhabit the 'rose garden,' which has become associated with 'what might have been.'" then those echoes include at least the ones of Alice in her wonderland:

[Mr. Eliot] has told us that he drew from Alice in Wonderland that rose-garden with which the first of the Four Quartets opens, leading into the image of the rose which pervades and closes the last of them. In his 1929 essay on the Dante he so greatly reveres he says that we have "to pass through the looking-glass into a world which is just as reasonable as our own. When we have done that we begin to wonder whether the world of Dante is not both larger and more solid than our own." Nonsense goes deep in Mr. Eliot.⁶⁰

Perhaps Eliot himself had done enough to define the essential nature of the garden, its genesis and inner dimensions:

Lady of silences
 Calm and distressed
 Torn and most whole
 Rose of memory
 Rose of forgetfulness
 Exhausted and life-giving
 Worried reposeful
 The single Rose
 Is now the Garden
 Where all loves end
 Terminate torment
 Of love unsatisfied
 The greater torment
 Of love satisfied
 End of the endless
 Journey to no end
 Conclusion of all that
 Is inconclusible
 Speech without word and
 Word of no speech
 Grace to the Mother
 For the Garden
 Where all love ends.⁶¹

In Eliot's plays the rose-garden is never directly revealed to the audience, as it is in, say, Hamlet's monologue, "O that this too, too, solid flesh"; it usually is manifested through a private space,

where two friends who trust each other compare notes on self-awareness. On the other hand (to put things in the convention of traditional drama) in so far as every speech may be said to reveal character, so, to a certain extent, every line of every play can be seen as an entrance to someone's rose-garden. The choral chants of Murder in the Cathedral, for instance, open the interior space of each Chorus member, revealing both how similar to each other all the members are, and, at the same time, how their paranoia projects their diseased inner space onto Becket in a truly cinematic fashion:

Archbishop, secure and assured of your fate, unaffrayed
among the shades, do you realise what you ask, do you
realise what it means
To the small folk drawn into the pattern of fate, the small
folk who live among small things,
The strain on the brain of the small folk who stand to the
doom of the house, the doom of their lord, the doom
of the world?
O Thomas, Archbishop, leave us, leave us, leave sullen Dover
and set sail for France. Thomas our Archbishop still
our Archbishop even in France. Thomas Archbishop,
set the white sail between the grey sky and the bitter
sea, leave us, leave us for France.⁶²

Or how, once the diseased space is confronted and admitted, there is, as in the case of Charles and Monica, a recognition of mutual personal respect and radiation of that respect onto the former object of projectional abuse:

Nothing is possible but the shamed swoon
Of those consenting to the last humiliation.
I have consented, Lord Archbishop, have consented.
Am torn away, subdued, violated,
United to the spiritual flesh of nature,
Mastered by the animal powers of spirit,
Dominated by the lust of self-demolition,
By the final utter uttermost death of spirit,
By the final ecstasy of waste and shame.
O Lord Archbishop, O Thomas Archbishop, forgive us,
forgive us, pray for us that we may pray for you,
out of our shame.⁶³

In The Family Reunion the central personal space, in fact the only personal space that functions dramatically, is that of Harry, Lord Monchensey. The basic dramatic action of the play is in fact the transformation of his personal space from the projectional to the radiant. As the play begins the process of transformation has already begun. There remains only the business of introducing the other characters into the process for Harry's benefit. Harry describes exactly what has happened inside himself:

HARRY

I still have to learn exactly what their meaning is.
 At the beginning, eight years ago,
 I felt, at first, that sense of separation,
 Of isolation unredeemable, irrevocable-
 It's eternal, or gives a knowledge of eternity,
 Because it feels eternal while it lasts. That is one hell.
 Then the numbness came to cover it - that is another -
 That was the second hell of not being there,
 The degradation of being parted from myself,
 From the self which persisted only as an eye, seeing.
 All this last year, I could not fit myself together:
 When I was inside the old dream, I felt all the same emotion
 Or lack of emotion, as before: the same loathing
 Diffused, I not a person, in a world not of persons
 But only of contaminating presences.
 And then I had no horror of my action,
 I only felt the repetition of it
 Over and over. When I was outside,
 I could associate nothing of it with myself,
 Though nothing else was real. I thought foolishly
 That when I got back to Wishwood, as I had left it,
 Everything would fall into place. But they prevent it.
 I still have to find out what their meaning is.
 Here I have been finding
 A misery long forgotten, and a new torture,
 The shadow of something behind our meagre childhood,
 Some origin of wretchedness. Is that what they would
 show me?

[II, 2, 19 - 34]

The they of which Harry speaks is, of course, the Eumenides which he projects onto the external world or public space. This is "the old

dream" which Harry speaks of finding himself inside. The Eumenides force him outside the dream in order that he may face and understand it. In a sense, Harry is beside himself - on the outside - looking into his own diseased personal space. He discovers that the disease consists basically of the fact that the space is not his (how else could he be forced out of it); in other words, that it is a space created for him, as Agatha goes on to tell him, by his parents, in which he continually re-enacts, or ritualises their diseased private space. Harry is, in effect, possessed by his parents, and is molded by them as if he were a work of art or a piece of human plastic.

The repetition syndrome, as Harry describes it ("I had no horror of my action,/ I only felt the repetition of it/ Over and over), is not unlike that compulsion dominating the anti-hero of John Fowles'

The Magus:

'The subject has preyed sexually and emotionally on a number of young women. His method, according to Dr. Maxwell, is to stress and exhibit his loneliness and unhappiness-in short, to play the little boy in search of the lost mother. He thereby arouses repressed maternal instincts in his victims which he then proceeds to exploit with the semi-incestuous ruthlessness of this type.

.
'To sum up he is behaviorally the victim of a repetition compulsion that he has failed to understand. In every environment he looks for those elements that allow him to feel isolated, that allow him to justify his withdrawal from meaningful social responsibilities and relationships and his consequent regression into the infantile state of frustrated self-gratification. At present this autistic regression takes the form mentioned above, of affaires with young women.⁶⁴

In Harry's case, the repetition involves a ritualized execration of the parental disorder through an apparent killing of his wife. The repressed true inner space, or rose-garden, projects the Eumenides who force the re-enactment of the deed which Harry would escape but cannot.

Eliot rendered a poetic description of the enforced repetitive process, and therefore, in a sense, described ritual itself:

AGATHA

I only looked through the little door
When the sun was shining on the rose-garden:
And heard in the distance tiny voices
And then a black raven flew over.
And then I was only my own feet walking
Away, down a concrete corridor
In a dead air. Only feet walking
And sharp heel scraping. Over and under
Echo and noise of feet.
I was only the feet, and the eye
Seeing the feet: the unwinking eye
Fixing the movement. Over and under.

HARRY

In and out, in an endless drift
Of shrieking forms in a circular desert
Weaving with contagion of putrescent embraces
On dissolving bone. In and out, the movement
Until the chain broke, and I was left
Under the single eye above the desert.

AGATHA

Up and down, through the stone passages
Of an immense and empty hospital
Pervaded by a smell of disinfectant,
Looking straight ahead, passing barred windows.
Up and down. Until the chain breaks.

HARRY

To and fro, dragging my feet
Among inner shadows in the smoky wilderness,
Trying to avoid the clasping branches
And the giant lizard. To and fro.
Until the chain breaks.

The chain breaks,
The wheel stops, and the noise of machinery,
And the desert is cleared, under the judicial sun
Of the final eye, and the awful evacuation
Cleanses.

I was not there, you were not there, only our
phantasms
And what did not happen is as true as what did happen
O my dear, and you walked through the little door
And I ran to meet you in the rose-garden.

AGATHA

This is the next moment. This is the beginning.
 We do not pass twice through the same door
 Or return to the door through which we did not pass.
 I have seen the first stage: relief from what happened
 Is also relief from that unfulfilled craving
 Flattered in sleep, and deceived in waking.
 You have a long journey.

[II, 2, 184 - 224]

In essence, all of Eliot's plays are breakings of the chains of projection which free their respective rose-gardens to radiate liveable futures for their characters.

To a certain extent, Harry's projections or phantasms are not the ordinary, self-centred projections of the characters in a play like The Cocktail Party, for Harry himself has been a kind of projection screen for the selfish desires of his parents and Agatha:

HARRY

. . .
 I only now begin to have some understanding
 Of you, and of all of us. Family affection
 Was a kind of formal obligation, a duty
 Only noticed by its neglect. One had that part to play.
 After such training, I could endure, these ten years,
 Playing a part that had been imposed upon me;
 And I returned to find another one made ready -
 The book laid out, lines underscored, and the costume
 Ready to be put on. But it is very odd:
 When other people seemed so strong, their apparent
 strength
 Stifled my decision. Now I see
 I might even become fonder of my mother -
 More compassionate at least - by understanding.
 But she would not like that. Now I see
 I have been wounded in a war of phantoms,
 Not by human beings - they have no more power than I.
 The things I thought were real are shadows, and the real
 Are what I thought were private shadows. O that awful
 privacy
 Of the insane mind! Now I can live in public.
 Liberty is a different kind of pain from prison.

[II, 2, 164 - 183]

While Agatha, in the role of the seer, remains on the perimeter of the rose-garden ("I only looked through the little door/ When the sun was shining on the rose-garden" [II, 2, 184-185]); Harry escapes his diseased inner-space by facing the Eumenides, and accepting their presence as a part of his inner-space. By facing these manifestations of his true inner space, and by thereby admitting the imperfections of his parents, Harry returns to his old self. This old self is, ironically, a new self, for it has never had a chance to operate. Harry now chases after the Eumenides in order to discover his own rose-garden, one which, apparently, will not satisfy the various projectors of Wishwood:

HARRY

I shall have to learn. That is still unsettled.
 I have not yet had the precise directions.
 Where does one go from a world of insanity?
 Somewhere on the other side of despair.
 To the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,
 A stony sanctuary and a primitive altar,
 The heat of the sun and the icy vigil,
 A care over lives of humble people,
 The lesson of ignorance, of incurable diseases.
 Such things are possible. It is love and terror
 Of what waits and wants me, and will not let me fall.
 Let the cricket chirp. John shall be the master.
 All I have is his. No harm can come to him.
 What would destroy me will be life for John,
 I am responsible for him. Why I have this election
 I do not understand. It must have been preparing always,
 And I see it was what I always wanted. Strength demanded
 That seems too much, is just strength enough given.
 I must follow the bright angels.

[II, 2, 329 - 346]

In The Cocktail Party the significant personal spaces are those of Edward Chamberlayne and Celia Copplestone. This couple use each other as screens on which to project images that will answer

their emotional needs:

CELIA

Oh, I thought that I was giving him so much!
 And he to me - and the giving and the taking
 Seemed so right: not in terms of calculation
 Of what was good for the persons we had been
 But for the new person, us. If I could feel
 As I did then, even now it would seem right.
 And then I found we were only strangers
 And that there had been neither giving nor taking
 But that we had merely made use of each other
 Each for his purpose. That's horrible, Can we only love
 Something created by our own imagination?
 Are we all in fact unloving and unlovable?
 Then one is alone, and if one is alone
 Then lover and beloved are equally unreal
 And the dreamer is no more real than his dreams.

[II, 607 - 621]

This mutual flattery which constitutes a private space of a very tenuous character must be overcome by each person's recognizing the true nature of his personal space. Eliot, in discussing D.H. Lawrence, once described the lesson which Edward and Celia (not to mention Edward's wife, Lavinia and her lover, Peter Quilpe) find they must learn:

What a pity that he [Lawrence] did not understand the simple truth that of any two human beings each has privacies which the other cannot penetrate, and boundaries which the other must not transgress, and that yet human intimacy can be wonderful and life-giving: a truth well known to Christian thought, though we do not need to be Christian to understand it.⁶⁵

For Edward, the recognition of the true nature of his personal space comes in the form of a realization of his aloneness, an aloneness which is the first step in the establishment of personal integrity:

EDWARD

There was a door
 And I could not open it. I could not touch the handle.
 Why could I not walk out of my prison?

What is hell? Hell is oneself,
 Hell is alone, the other figures in it
 Merely projections. There is nothing to escape from
 And nothing to escape to. One is always alone.

[I, 3, 424 - 430]

The concept of the diseased personal space as a hell seems to have been very important to Eliot. According to Martin Browne, Eliot was out to counteract certain ideas of Sartre, which, given Sartre's popularity, might have become very influential:

I remember vividly one incident at the dress rehearsal. I was sitting in the front row of the dress-circle, and Eliot was immediately behind me. As Edward spoke the line

Hell is oneself

near the end of his quarrel with Lavinia, Eliot leaned over and whispered: 'Contre Sartre.' The line, and the whole story of Edward and Lavinia, are his reply to 'Hell is other people' in Huis Clos.⁶⁶

The very concept of projecting desires is one of the chief persecutions of hell. Such a concept is of course at least an Elizabethan one, if not also a Medieval one:

MEPHOSTOPHILIS

· · ·
 Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
 In one self place, but where we are is hell,
 And where hell is, there must we ever be;
 And, to be short, when all the world dissolved
 And every creature shall be purify'd,
 All places shall be hell that is not heaven.⁶⁷

Perhaps, given the following speech by Edward, Eliot's image of the rose-garden for the healthy personal space, should be opposed by Hamlet's image of the "unweeded garden/ That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/ Possess it merely",⁶⁸ for the unhealthy, hell-like personal space:

EDWARD

O God, O God, if I could return to yesterday
 Before I thought that I had made a decision.

What devil left the door on the latch
 For these doubts to enter? And then you came back, you
 The angel of destruction - just as I felt sure.
 In a moment, at your touch, there is nothing but ruin.
 O God, what have I done? The python. The octopus.
 Must I become after all what you would make me?

[I, 3, 464 - 471]

Edward's cauterization is, however, intentionally undramatic.

Edward is by nature both boring and bored. He is Eliot's confrontation of the 'ordinary' life, life as Reilly describes it to Celia:

REILLY

The condition is curable.
 But the form of treatment must be your own choice:
 I cannot choose for you. If that is what you wish,
 I can reconcile you to the human condition,
 The condition to which some who have gone as far as you
 Have succeeded in returning. They may remember
 The vision they have had, but they cease to regret it,
 Maintain themselves by the common routine,
 Learn to avoid excessive expectation,
 Become tolerant of themselves and others,
 Giving and taking, in the usual actions
 What there is to give and take. They do not repine;
 Are contented with the morning that separates
 And with the evening that brings together
 For casual talk before the fire
 Two people who know they do not understand each other,
 Breeding children whom they do not understand
 And who will never understand them. [II, 653 - 668]

Edward learns simply to laugh, to tease his wife a little, and to be considerate of other people's feelings - and these indeed are his basic chores in the final act of the play.

Celia Copplestone makes a more extensive excursion into personal space and is, in a sense, therefore, of more dramatic interest; but, both because her space is personal to her, and because the play is about private spaces rather than personal ones, Celia's personal space is not given a dramatic role to play. Celia, instead, because she is oriented

to the personal, has the job of explaining the personal. For instance, she is very perceptive about the nature of projections:

CELIA

I am not sure, Edward, that I understand you;
 And yet I understand as I never did before.
 I think - I believe - you are being yourself
 As you never were before, with me.
 Twice you have changed since I have been looking at you.
 I looked at your face: and I thought that I knew
 And loved every contour; and as I looked
 It withered, as if I had unwrapped a mummy.
 I listened to your voice, that had always thrilled me,
 And it became another voice - no, not a voice:
 What I heard was only the noise of an insect,
 Dry, endless, meaningless, inhuman-
 You might have made it by scraping your legs together-
 Or however grasshoppers do it. I looked,
 And listened for your heart, your blood;
 And saw only a beetle the size of a man
 With nothing more inside it than what comes out
 When you tread on a beetle.

EDWARD

Perhaps that is what I am.
 Tread on me, if you like.

CELIA

No, I won't tread on you.
 That is not what you are. It is only what was left
 Of what I had thought you were. I see another person,
 I see you as a person whom I never saw before.
 The man I saw before, he was only a projection-
 I see that now- of something that I wanted -
 No, not wanted - something I aspired to-
 Something that I desperately wanted to exist.
 It must happen somewhere- but what, and where is it?
 Edward, I see that I was simply making use of you.
 And I ask you to forgive me.

[I, 2, 267 - 291]

Celia is also aware of the dream-like or cinematographic quality of the diseased personal space and of how unsatisfying this mere visionary quality is. Her awareness of the inadequacy of a self-created space also leads her to an awareness of the ultimate inadequacy of even the

normal or "common sense" world:

CELIA

What had I thought that the future could be?
I abandoned the future before we began,
And after that I lived in a present
Where time was meaningless, a private world of ours
Where the word 'happiness' had a different meaning
Or so it seemed.

EDWARD

I have heard of that experience.

CELIA

A dream. I was happy in it till to-day,
And then, when Julia asked about Lavinia
And it came to me that Lavinia had left you
And that you would be free - then I suddenly discovered
That the dream was not enough; that I wanted something more
And I waited, and wanted to run to tell you.
Perhaps the dream was better. It seemed the real reality,
And if this is reality, it is very like a dream.
Perhaps it was I who betrayed my own dream
All the while; and to find I wanted
This world as well as that ... well, it's humiliating.

[I, 2, 167 - 183]

Celia's perception of the ultimate inadequacy of any world at present available to her makes her a fit subject for what Reilly calls "transhumanization" or transfer to another spatial condition, a process which involves detachment from any heretofore known space, and which therefore involves death:

REILLY

There is another way, if you have the courage.
The first I could describe in familiar terms
Because you have seen it, as we all have seen it,
Illustrated, more or less, in lives of those about us.
The second is unknown, and so requires faith-
The kind of faith that issues from despair.
The destination cannot be described;
You will know very little until you get there;
You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession
Of what you have sought for in the wrong place.

CELIA

That sounds like what I want. But what is my duty?

REILLY

Whichever way you choose will prescribe its own duty.

CELIA

Which way is better?

REILLY

Neither way is better.
Both ways are necessary. It is also necessary
To make a choice between them.

CELIA

Then I choose the second.

REILLY

It is a terrifying journey.

CELIA

I am not frightened
But glad. I suppose it is a lonely way?

REILLY

No lonelier than the other. But those who take the other
Can forget their loneliness. You will not forget yours.
Each way means loneliness - and communion.
Both ways avoid the final desolation
Of solitude in the phantasmal world
Of imagination, shuffling memories and desires.

CELIA

That is the hell I have been in.

REILLY

It isn't hell
Till you become incapable of anything else.

[II, 690 - 714]

A final note on personal space in The Cocktail Party concerns the absence of the image of the rose-garden. Eliot seems temporarily to have traded Dante, et al., for Thoreau and Walden Pond. Celia goes beyond Walden to her monkey business in the jungles of Kinkanja, while Edward beats a hasty retreat out of the sacred wood (cf. Wishwood

and Hollywood) back to Concord:

REILLY

And this man. What does he now seem like, to you?

CELIA

Like a child who has wandered into a forest
Playing with an imaginary playmate
And suddenly discovers he is only a child
Lost in a forest, wanting to go home.

REILLY

Compassion may be already a clue
Towards finding your own way out of the forest.

CELIA

But even if I find my way out of the forest
I shall be left with the inconsolable memory
Of the treasure I went into the forest to find
And never found, and which was not there
And perhaps is not anywhere? But if not anywhere,
Why do I feel guilty at not having found it?

REILLY

Disillusion can become itself an illusion
If we rest in it.

CELIA

I cannot argue.
It's not that I'm afraid of being hurt again:
Nothing again can either hurt or heal.
I have thought at moments that the ecstasy is real
Although those who experience it may have no reality.
For what happened is remembered like a dream
In which one is exalted by intensity of loving
In the spirit, a vibration of delight
Without desire, for desire is fulfilled
In the delight of loving. A state one does not know
When awake. But what, or whom I loved,
Or what in me was loving, I do not know.
And if that is all meaningless, I want to be cured
Of a craving for something I cannot find
And of the shame of never finding it.
Can you cure me?

[II, 622 - 651]

The use of the particularly American image of a dream-like forest which promises an ecstasy more real than anything to be found in the waking world is perhaps a gesture of homage to the great American

film industry. Certainly Peter Quilpe is a pure offspring from, and complete servant of, the cinema culture. He reverences Celia in a very dream-like way and quite appropriately finds his "métier", as Reilly calls it [III, 365], behind the viewfinder of the archetype of modern dream machines, the camera. Julia hints that perhaps all is not bad with the film industry:

JULIA

You must have learned to look at people, Peter,
 When you look at them with an eye for the films:
 That is, when you're not concerned with yourself
 But just being an eye. You will come to think of
 Celia like that, one day. And then you'll understand her
 And be reconciled, and be happy in the thought of her.

[II, 407 - 412]

The Confidential Clerk brings the rose-garden into full view. In fact the play is essentially about one man in particular, and his discovery of his ordinary but personal, and therefore confidential, self. In The Confidential Clerk there are three important scenes to consider from the point of view of personal space. The first [I, 641 - 827] is basically a get-aquainted scene between a possible father and son, Sir Claude Mulhammer and Colby Simpkins. Both have three things in common: a frustrated secondary artistic talent, an occupation in life to which they have been directed externally rather than voluntarily, and a misunderstanding about their relationships with their respective fathers. They discover, to their mutual surprise, that both have the same means of building a restraining wall against their fate - they take refuge in their art - Sir Claude in his pottery, and Colby in his music.

The use of art as refuge is an extremely important point in Eliot's plays, for diseased personal spaces are products of the imagination, and rose-gardens are responses of the imagination to the undefinable personal characteristics of the individual, as The Confidential Clerk makes clear [II, 116-230]. The person of secondary artistic talent, as are both Sir Claude and Colby, is placed in a peculiar situation. He has the advantage over people like Harry Monchensey of The Family Reunion and Edward Chamberlayne and Celia Copplestone of The Cocktail Party who cannot, like him, externalize, at least for themselves and in legitimate terms, their personal space. At the same time he is forced, unlike a talent of the first order such as Eliot himself in his creative periods, to accept rather than to control the limitations of his particular artistic medium. The situation of the artist's mind in the bourgeois body was a very early and very important preoccupation of Eliot's, as he made clear in "Eeldrop and Appleplex":

"I test people", said Eeldrop, "by the way in which I imagine them as waking up in the morning. I am not drawing upon memory when I imagine Edith waking to a room strewn with clothes, papers, cosmetics, letters and a few books, the smell of Violettes de Parme and stale tobacco. The sunlight beating in through broken blinds, and broken blinds keeping out the sun until Edith can compel herself to attend to another day. Yet the vision does not give me much pain. I think of her as an artist without the slightest artistic power."

"The artistic temperament-" began Appleplex.

"No, not that." Eeldrop snatched away the opportunity. "I mean that what holds the artist together is the work which he does; separate him from his work and he either disintegrates or solidifies. There is no interest in the artist apart from his work. And there are, as you said, those people who provide material for the artist. Now Edith's poem 'To Atthis' proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that she is not an artist. On the other hand I have often thought of her, as I thought this evening, as presenting possibilities for poetic purposes. But the people who can be material for art must have in them something unconscious, something which they do not fully realise or understand.

Edith, in spite of what is called her impenetrable mask presents herself too well. I cannot use her; she uses herself too fully. Partly for the same reason I think, she fails to be an artist: she does not live at all upon instinct. The artist is part of him a drifter, at the mercy of impressions, and another part of him allows this to happen for the sake of making use of the unhappy creature. But in Edith the division is merely the rational, the cold and detached part of the artist, itself divided. Her material, her experience that is, is already a mental product, already digested by reason. Hence Edith (I only at this moment arrive at understanding) is really the most orderly person in existence, and the most rational. Nothing ever happens to her; everything that happens is her own doing."

"And hence also," continued Appleplex, catching up the thread, "Edith is the least detached of all persons, since to be detached is to be detached from one's self, to stand by and criticise coldly one's own passions and vicissitudes. But in Edith the critic is coaching the combatant."

"Edith is not unhappy."

"She is dissatisfied, perhaps."

"But again I say, she is not tragic: she is too rational. And in her career there is no progression, no decline or degeneration. Her condition is once and for always. There is and will be no catastrophe."

"But I am tired. I still wonder what Edith and Mrs. Howexden have in common. This invites the consideration (you may not perceive the connection) of Sets and Society, a subject which we can pursue tomorrow night."⁶⁹

Both Sir Claude and Colby are somewhat in Edith's role; their material and their experience "is already a mental product, already digested by reason". They cannot be tragic, nor can they suffer catastrophe; indeed, they can only sit and contemplate and express their contemplation:

LUCASTA

And your garden is a garden
Where you hear a music that no one else could hear,
Where the flowers have a scent that no one else could smell.

COLBY

You may be right, up to a point.
And yet, you know, its not quite real to me-
Although its as real to me as . . . this world.
But that's just the trouble. They seem so unrelated.
I turn the key and walk through the gate,
And there I am . . . alone, in my 'garden.'

Alone, that's the thing. That's why it's not real.
 You know, I think that Eggerson's garden
 Is more real than mine.

LUCASTA

Eggerson's garden?
 What makes you think of Eggerson - of all people?

COLBY

Well, he retires to his garden - literally,
 And also in the same sense that I retire to mine.
 But he doesn't feel alone there. And when he comes out
 He has marrows, or beetroot, or peas . . . for Mrs.
 Eggerson.

[II, 152 - 168]

Eggerson, who, as police-servant, is an artist of the handling, rather than of the making, of human relationships, is one example of the unified individual living in a pleasantly varied set of personal, private and public spaces. His rose-garden and his vegetable garden are one and the same reality. He communicates the essential unity of his personal world to others by his absolute respect for their personal worlds; at the same time he shares the strength he derives from that personal world with those with whom he comes in contact in his private and public spaces. Eggerson, in other words, manages to achieve the minor miracle of unifying all of the spaces he moves through, without robbing them of their variety. Who could be more qualified to fulfill the role of police-servant, the role of keeping the boundaries of personal space in some realistic relation to those of public and private space, and therefore of preventing or apprehending transgressions of those boundaries?

The unity which Eggerson brings to his three worlds out of the unity he derives from his vegetable garden qua rose-garden objectifies the essential harmony between town and country which Eliot

felt to underlie Virgil's Georgics:

Why did he write them? It is not to be supposed that he was endeavouring to teach their business to the farmers of his native soil; or that he aimed simply to provide a useful handbook for townsmen eager to buy land and launch out as farmers. Nor is it likely that he was merely anxious to compile records, for the curiosity of later generations, of the methods of agriculture in his time. It is more likely that he hoped to remind absentee landowners, careless of their responsibilities and drawn by love of pleasure or love of politics to the metropolis, of the fundamental duty to cherish the land. Whatever his conscious motive, it seems clear to me that Virgil desired to affirm the dignity of agricultural labour, and the importance of good cultivation of the soil for the well-being of the state both materially and spiritually.

The fact that every major poetic form employed by Virgil has some precedent in Greek verse, must not be allowed to obscure the originality with which he recreated every form he used. There is I think no precedent for the spirit of the Georgics; and the attitude towards the soil, and the labour of the soil, which is there expressed, is something that we ought to find particularly intelligible now, when urban agglomeration, the flight from the land, the pillage of the earth and the squandering of natural resources are beginning to attract attention. It was the Greeks who taught us the dignity of leisure; it is from them that we inherit the perception that the highest life is the life of contemplation. But this respect for leisure, with the Greeks, was accompanied by a contempt for the banausic occupations. Virgil perceived that agriculture is fundamental to civilization, and he affirmed the dignity of manual labour.⁷⁰

Eggerson, through his own respect for work, exemplifies the first of the three words, labor, pietas, and fatum, which, according to Eliot, made Virgil "sympathetic to the Christian mind".⁷¹ The importance to Eliot of work, and of agricultural labor in particular, as well as Eggerson's illustration of that concept, deserve further examination.

The rose-garden, that is to say, is not simply of inner spiritual significance for Eliot, but is a symbol which unifies all aspects of a person's behaviour. The rose-garden is perhaps the meaning of the city in Eliot's plays. In any case Eliot most certainly felt that the vegetable garden, the farm, was the most important element in any society:

The essential point is that agriculture ought to be saved and revived because agriculture is the foundation for the Good Life in any society; it is in fact the normal life. What matters is not that we should grow the bulk of our own wheat, even if that were possible, in pursuit of the chimera of independence; but that the land of the country should be used and dwelt upon by a stable community engaged in its cultivation. If tariffs will help, let us have tariffs, but that is a question of means. No one would pretend that life on the land is a very good one for a man with a family, whose wage is only a few shillings more than the dole; but agricultural life is capable of being the best life for the majority of any people. And it is hardly too much to say that only in a primarily agricultural society, in which people have local attachments to their small domains and small communities, and remain, generation after generation in the same place, is genuine patriotism possible; not the artificial patriotism of the press, of political combinations and unnatural frontiers and the League of Nations.⁷²

One writer in whom Eliot seems to have shown some interest,⁷³ and who did indeed pay careful attention to the need for a proper balance between town and country life, was Ebenezer Howard, the originator of the Garden City movement. Howard expressed ideas which Eggerson seems to incorporate almost unconsciously into his daily life:

. . . neither the Town magnet nor the Country magnet represents the full plan and purpose of nature. Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together. The two magnets must be made one. As man and woman by their varied gifts and faculties supplement each other, so should town and country. The town is the symbol of society - of mutual help and friendly co-operation, of fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, sisterhood, of wide relations between man and man - of broad, expanding sympathies - of science, art, culture, religion. And the country! The country is the symbol of God's love and care for man. All that we are and all that we have comes from it. Our bodies are formed of it; to it they return. We are fed by it, clothed by it, and by it we are warmed and sheltered. On its bosom we rest. Its beauty is the inspiration of art, of music, of poetry. Its forces propel all the wheels of industry. It is the source of all health, all wealth, all knowledge. But its fullness of joy and wisdom has not revealed itself to man. Nor can it ever, so long as this unholy, unnatural separation of society and nature endures. Town and country must be married, and out of this joyous union will spring new hope, a new life, a new civilization. It is the purpose of this work to show how a first step can be taken in this direction by the construction of a town-country magnet; . . .⁷⁴

Just as Eggerson, when he comes out of his vegetable garden, "has

marrows, or beetroot, or peas . . . for Mrs. Eggerson" [II, 168], so Howard's Garden City farmer has a ready consumer with whom a healthy interdependence can be established:

A ray - a beam of hope will gladden the heart of the despairing home-producer of wheat, for while the American has to pay railway charges to the seaboard, charges for Atlantic transit and railway charges to the consumer, the farmer of Garden City has a market at his very doors, and this a market which the rent he contributes will help to build up.⁷⁵

Such interdependence is of course the root of an organically structured society. The very words Eliot used to describe his own conception of the organic society⁷⁶ find a parallel in Howard's description of the growth of a Garden City:

A town, like a flower, or a tree, or an animal, should, at each stage of its growth, possess unity, symmetry, completeness, and the effect of growth should never be to destroy that unity, but to give it greater purpose, nor to mar that symmetry, but to make it more symmetrical; while the completeness of that early structure should be merged in the yet greater completeness of the later development.⁷⁷

The organism must of course be maintained in some ordered formal pattern as it grows, otherwise the jungle-like chaos of the city will result.

In the well structured rose-garden, as in the symmetrically ordered Garden City, the life of the inhabitants has such a complete unity with the garden as to make the inhabitants virtually indistinguishable from their surroundings:

There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,
In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,
And the bird called, in response to
The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,
And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
Had the look of flowers that are looked at.
There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting.
So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,

Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
 To look down into the drained pool.
 Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
 And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
 And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
 The surface glittered out of heart of light,
 And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
 Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.⁷⁸

As are most utopias, Eliot's desired organic, agriculturally oriented society (and Howard's plan for a nation of Garden Cities) was only a possibility:

What might have been is an abstraction
 Remaining a perpetual possibility
 Only in a world of speculation.⁷⁹

Perhaps the abstraction of "What might have been" accounts in part for the invisibility of the inhabitants of the rose-garden. They are, however, no more invisible nor impossible than Eggerson, and the very concrete, unmythical way of life which he represents, and which, no doubt, some people actually manage to live.

A very concrete example of the integral involvement of nature in the life of a great city are the garden squares of London. The garden squares like the Garden Cities manifest the formal and qualitatively rich characteristics of Eliot's rose-garden. And, what is more important for the purposes of the present argument, the garden squares of London, as Sigfried Giedion has pointed out, are a direct result of, and therefore a significant objectification of, the Englishman's love of personal privacy:

In the garden squares of London we have for the first time since the Middle Ages the outward appearance of a city determined by the building activities of the upper middle classes. These classes created a residential style as self-confident as it is lasting. Like the Flemish towns of the fifteenth century, these London squares of the early nineteenth century will bear witness for generations to the

sureness with which the middle classes set about providing a framework for their lives, unless these squares are destroyed by insensate building.

To understand the true nature of their development we must first of all remember the English preoccupation with the idea of comfort, especially the Englishman's insistence upon comfort in the home, all the way from the comfortable chair before the fire to the undisturbed privacy of the individual house. This strong urge toward bienséance does not appear for the first time in the eighteenth century. To see how far back it goes and how early it influenced the organization of his dwelling, one need only compare the spacious settings and arrangement of early English manor houses with their Continental counterparts. It is to this desire for comfort and privacy that the garden squares of London owe their particular pattern. Indeed, if the development of London may be said to follow any rule, it is unwritten - like so many of those English laws that carry most weight - and derives from the democratic insistence that a man shall not be disturbed in his private life. The rule runs roughly as follows: The residential quarters of a city should, as far as possible, merge into greenery. They should be inconspicuous.⁸⁰

The privacy of the London squares was not simply the privacy of an intimate group of people, but was even more the privacy of the individual in an almost romantic and certainly very healthy communion with nature, as Giedion goes on to elaborate:

The main constituent of all the London squares is a central garden of grass and plane trees When newly planted, the rows of plane trees did not achieve the effect of a secluded, romantic garden which they were intended later to produce. Such a picture required the existence of a wall of greenery, which, grateful both to eyes and to lungs, had also the advantage of ensuring privacy from one's neighbors. Each square garden was treated as a unit, just as the houses were. There was no ridiculous breaking up into small allotments but wide expanses where the residents might stretch themselves out on the grass on sunny days or play tennis on the green lawns in front of their own houses. And all this within five minutes' walk of the surging traffic of Tottenham Court Road or Oxford Street.⁸¹

It is perhaps an anomaly to have to mention Eggerson and the garden squares of London in the same breath. Eggerson is, after all, like his counterparts Downing and Winchell in The Family Reunion, a police-servant from the lower classes, while the garden squares are a middle class phenomenon. Yet it is Eggerson, and not his middle class

employers, who appreciates the garden. To Eggerson must the others come to learn of its necessity and meaning. It is very likely that here lies the clue to the relationship between Eliot's urban morality drama and his early dramatic-social theory connected with the music-hall. If Eliot's final four plays are seen, as they surely must be, as attempts at the salvation of the emotional and moral health of the middle, and especially the upper middle class, then a character like Eggerson, whose class Eliot so closely identified with the moral health of the music-hall, must be seen as an attempt on Eliot's part to use the vitality of the lower class to save the middle class. While the music-hall culture was virtually dead at the time Eliot wrote his urban moralities, the survival of what it represented, in the person of Eggerson, would make the music-hall a kind of rose-garden from which Eliot could continue to derive the artistic and moral strength with which he wished to impregnate his drama. The anomaly then would lie, not so much in Eggerson's appreciation of the luxury of a garden which belonged more to a class above him, as in the failure of that higher class to appreciate what it possessed, a failure Eliot was trying to rectify.

The action of The Confidential Clerk is basically concerned with establishing some correspondence between garden and garden, or personal space and personal space. The Family Reunion, The Cocktail Party, and, to some extent, The Elder Statesman, deal with personal spaces which are vitiated by diseased private spaces. Once the disease undergoes the cure of revelation the personal space recedes into the background - man being a sociable creature. There are no

longer incompatible forces which compel the personal space to project its presence onto, and thereby disease, some pseudo-private space. In The Confidential Clerk the private spaces are real or basically undiseased, but filled with the ignorance of and confusion of a somewhat careless past. The task of the play is to explore Colby's personal space in order that he may establish his own healthy private spaces with the other characters in the play. It is unacceptable that he should either force the other personal spaces to conform to his, or that his personal space should conform to theirs. Therefore his personal space must be thoroughly understood. This understanding consists basically in a discovery of what Colby's real desires are and of who his real parents are (a personal space or personality reflects the private space or parentage out of which it grows). Until such an understanding is achieved Colby is denied that unity of reality that belongs to Eggerson:

COLBY

I'm being very serious.
 What I mean is, my garden's no less unreal to me
 Than the world outside it. If you have two lives
 Which have nothing whatever to do with each other-
 Well, they're both unreal. But for Eggerson
 His garden is a part of one single world.

[II, 169 - 174]

Unity is achieved by finding a door by which the personal space can be shared with others to create new private spaces:

LUCASTA

But what do you want?

COLBY

Not to be alone there.
 If I were religious, God would walk in my garden
 And that would make the world outside it real
 And acceptable, I think.

LUCASTA

You sound awfully religious.
Is there no other way of making it real to you?

COLBY

It's simply the fact of being alone there
That makes it unreal.

LUCASTA

Can no one else enter?

COLBY

It can't be done by issuing invitations:
They would just have to come. And I should not see them coming.
I should not hear the opening of the gate
They would simply . . . be there suddenly,
Unexpectedly. Walking down an alley
I should become aware of someone walking with me.
That's the only way I can think of putting it.

[II, 175 - 133]

The parallel with Eliot's rose-garden and Howard's Garden City, reflected in Eggerson's corresponding personal space and vegetable garden, can also be found in the physical structuring of the scene between Colby and Lucasta in Colby's suite. Just as Colby and Lucasta, by discussing the nature of the garden and how it can be shared, thereby reveal unconsciously their gardens or personal spaces to each other, so the suite in which Colby lives is his personal space on the physical level, which becomes a physically private space shared by himself and Lucasta when Lucasta enters. As the scene progresses the physical situation demonstrates exactly how a personal space can be shared, just as Colby and Lucasta discover a verbal equivalent for the process of sharing:

LUCASTA

But you've something else, that I haven't got:
Something of which the music is a ... symbol.

I really would like to understand music,
 Not in order to be able to talk about it,
 But . . . partly, to enjoy it . . . and because of
 what it stands for.
 You know, I'm a little jealous of your music!
 When I see it as a means of contact with a world
 More real than any I've ever lived in.
 And I'd like to understand you.

COLBY

I believe you do already,
 Better than . . . other people. And I want to
 understand you.
 Does one ever come to understand anyone?

LUCASTA

I think you're being very discouraging:
 Are you doing it deliberately?

COLBY

That's not what I meant.
 I meant, there's no end to understanding a person.
 All one can do is to understand them better,
 To keep up with them; so that as the other changes
 You can understand the change as soon as it happens,
 Though you couldn't have predicted it.

LUCASTA

I think I'm changing.
 I've changed quite a lot in the last two hours.

COLBY

And I think I'm changing too. But perhaps what we
 call change . . .

LUCASTA

Is understanding better what one really is.
 And the reason why that comes about, perhaps . . .

LUCASTA

Is beginning to understand another person.

[II, 200 - 222]

At the same time, the scene also demonstrates what a delicate thing personal space can be and how important the parental private space is in constituting the new personal space. Colby is not, because of his supposed father's innocent connivance against his wife,

supposed to reveal his parentage. Thus a block is thrown into a full sharing of his personal space with Lucasta. Lucasta reveals her parentage, an area of her personal space of which she is somewhat ashamed, and in doing so unwittingly shocks Colby into his discovery that they are brother and sister. Lucasta of course cannot understand the shock and so misinterprets Colby's reaction - the doors are closed and the shattered rose-garden disappears:

LUCASTA

I can see well enough you are shocked.
 You ought to see your face! I'm disappointed.
 I suppose that's all. I believe you're more shocked
 Than if I'd told you I was Claude's mistress.
 Claude has always been ashamed of me:
 Now you're ashamed of me. I thought you'd understand.
 Little you know what it's like to be a bastard
 And wanted by nobody. I know why you're shocked:
 Claude has just accepted me like a debit item
 Always in his cash account. I don't like myself.
 I don't like the person I've forced myself to be;
 And I liked you because you didn't like that person either,
 And I thought you'd come to see me as the real
 kind of person
 That I want to be. That I know I am.
 That was new to me. I suppose I was flattered.
 And I thought, now, perhaps, if someone else sees me
 As I really am, I might become myself.

COLBY

Oh Lucasta, I'm not shocked. Not by you,
 Not by anything you think. It's to do with myself.

LUCASTA

Yourself, indeed! Your precious self!
 Why don't you shut yourself up in that garden
 Where you like to be alone with yourself?
 Or perhaps you think it would be bad for your prospects
 Now that you're Claude's white-headed boy.
 Perhaps he'll adopt you, and make you his heir
 And you'll marry another Lady Elizabeth.
 But in that event, Colby, you'll have to accept me
 As your sister! Even if I am a guttersnipe

[II, 296 - 323]

All that remains is for Colby's parentage to be straightened out so that he can become a unified person in a unified world.

If Eggerson's respect for work makes him an illustration of Virgil's first word, labor, then Colby's absolute insistence on remaining loyal to, and honest about, his parentage and his father as a frustrated musician, makes Colby a very precise illustration of Virgil's second word, pietas. Colby leaves Sir Claude's residence as it becomes a crumbling Troy of broken dreams, and goes, with his real father in his heart and his new born rose-garden in his hand to found his own little Rome in the land of Eggerson - Colby, a modern Aeneas:

When Virgil speaks, as he does, of pius Aeneas, we are apt to think of his care of his father, of his devotion to his father's memory, and of his touching encounter with his father on his descent into the nether regions. But the word pietas with Virgil has much wider associations of meaning: it implies an attitude towards the individual, towards the family, towards the region, and towards the imperial destiny of Rome. And finally Aeneas is 'pious' also in his respect towards the gods, and in his punctilious observance of rites and offerings. It is an attitude towards all these things, and therefore implies a unity and an order among them: it is in fact an attitude towards life.

Aeneas is therefore not simply a man endowed with a number of virtues, each of which is a kind of piety - so that to call him pius in general is merely to use a convenient collective term. Piety is one. These are aspects of piety in different contexts, and they all imply each other. In his devotion to his father he is not being just an admirable son. There is personal affection, without which filial piety would be imperfect; but personal affection is not piety. There is also devotion to his father as his father, as his progenitor: this is piety as the acceptance of a bond which one has not chosen. The quality of affection is altered, and its importance deepened, when it becomes love due to the object. But this filial piety is also the recognition of a further bond, that with the gods, to whom such an attitude is pleasing: to fail in it would be to be guilty of impiety also towards the gods. The gods must therefore be gods worthy of this respect; and without gods, or a god, regarded in this way, filial piety must perish. For then it becomes no longer a duty: your feeling towards your father will be due merely to the fortunate accident of congeniality, or will be reduced to a sentiment of gratitude for care and consideration. Aeneas is pious towards the gods, and in no way

does his piety appear more clearly than when the gods afflict him. He had a good deal to put up with from Juno; and even his mother Venus, as the benevolent instrument of his destiny, put him into one very awkward position. There is in Aeneas a virtue - an essential ingredient of his piety - which is an analogue and foreshadow of Christian humility. Aeneas is the antithesis, in important respects, of either Achilles or Odysseus. In so far as he is heroic, he is heroic as the original Displaced Person, the fugitive from a ruined city and an obliterated society, of which the few other survivors except his own band languish as slaves of the Greeks. He was not to have, like Ulysses, marvellous and exciting adventures with such occasional erotic episodes as left no canker on the conscience of that wayfarer. He was not to return at last to the remembered hearth-fire, to find an exemplary wife awaiting him, to be reunited to his son, his dog and his servants. Aeneas' end is only a new beginning; and the whole point of the pilgrimage is something which will come to pass for future generations. His nearest likeness is Job, but his reward is not what Job's was, but is only in the accomplishment of his destiny. He suffers for himself, he acts only in obedience. He is, in fact, the prototype of a Christian hero. For he is, humbly, a man with a mission; and the mission is everything.⁸²

With unification of the personality and of the world of Colby, and its consequent vindication of Colby's piety, comes, as well, the unification of Sir Claude. Because Sir Claude is no longer able to use Colby to give meaning to his own rose-garden, Sir Claude begins to share that garden with his wife. Since Lady Elizabeth also starts to share her personal space with Sir Claude, the two together establish a private space which has a potentially personal quality about it, as do the spaces of Eliot's other reconciled couples:

LADY ELIZABETH

It's very strange, Claude, but this is the first time
I have talked to you, without feeling very stupid.
You always made me feel that I wasn't worth talking to.

SIR CLAUDE

And you always made me feel that your interests
Were much too deep for discussion with me:
Health cures. And modern art- so long as it was modern-
And dervish dancing.

[III, 98 - 104]

To be fair, of course, it must be mentioned that Claude's ending is not a happy one. He is not all that anxious to be the unified man that he becomes. The cauterization of the son role he had projected on Colby, by virtually robbing Sir Claude of what was to be the centre piece in his rose-garden, results in the need for severe emotional readjustment on his part. There is something in Sir Claude's personal disaster (as also in Lord Claverton's in The Elder Statesman) of the man whose preoccupation with life left little room for a proper perspective on the purposes of life. Sir Claude, the financier, left only a little room for the man - witness A.J. Penty in The Criterion:

Surely this is a judgement of God. The reason why the City man is bored is because his activities are anti-social: in the pursuit of money he has broken, one by one, the links which bound him to his fellows. It comes about because he has concentrated all his energy upon means and disregarded the ends of life, because he has spent his whole life in making money without giving a moment's thought as to the ends which money would serve, because, in a word, he has inverted the Christian injunction to put spiritual things first: 'Take ye no thought, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' This is the right approach to life, but the City man has based his life upon the opposite assumption. 'Make many first', he said to himself, 'and all other things shall be added.' But he wakes up to find they are not added. That is the secret of his boredom.⁸³

The Elder Statesman creates the role of private space for Lord Claverton and his son Michael, the first and only time such a relationship actually occurs on stage in Eliot's plays. The role of this private space is of extreme importance for it consists of a failure of the two most important personal spaces in the play to meld into a real private space. The relationship of Lord Claverton and his son is, in a sense, an objectification of the missing link, of the apparatus of

failure, in human relationships.

The basic cause of Claverton's failure is his lack of a personal space. He thrives parasitically on his private space with his daughter, and autonomously in the public space of his image. Claverton's image in a sense has become his personal space. Claverton's retirement results in virtual amputation of his "self". When he looks at his empty appointment book he is looking at his personal space, his emptiness. Every word in the relevant passage is loaded on several levels. It is as if Claverton's first entrance on stage is his birth out of the world of images into the world of persons:

MONICA

You've been very long in coming, father. What have you been doing?

LORD CLAVERTON

Good afternoon, Charles. You might have guessed, Monica, What I've been doing. Don't you recognise this book?

MONICA

It's your engagement book.

LORD CLAVERTON

Yes, I've been brooding over it.

MONICA

But what a time for your engagement book!
You know what the doctors said: complete relaxation
And to think about nothing. Though I know that won't be easy.

LORD CLAVERTON

That is just what I was doing.

MONICA

Thinking of nothing?

LORD CLAVERTON

Contemplating nothingness. Just remember:
Every day, year after year, over my breakfast,
I have looked at this book - or one just like it -
You know I keep the old ones on a shelf together;
I could look in the right book, and find out what I was doing
Twenty years ago, to-day, at this hour of the afternoon.

If I've been looking at this engagement book, today,
 Not over breakfast, but before tea,
 It's the empty pages that I've been fingering -
 The first empty pages since I entered Parliament.
 I used to jot down notes of what I had to say to people:
 Now I've no more to say, and no one to say it to.
 I've been wondering . . . how many more empty pages?

[I, 173 - 198]

The rose-garden of Claverton's engagement books provides a very interesting analogy with the rose-garden of "Burnt Norton".⁸⁴ In "Burnt Norton" the echoes of Eliot's and others' words inhabit the garden. The garden is therefore a kind of resonating book in which "the unseen eyebeam" crosses the page, reading the echoes or words. Words are indeed the roses of the garden, "for the roses/ Had the look of flowers that are looked at". As words were Eliot's roses, so engagements, with everything that word means, are Claverton's roses. A possible answer to Claverton's query about the empty pages might be found in Eliot's observation in "The Dry Salvages":

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant-
 Among other things - or one way of putting the same thing:
 That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender
 spray
 Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,
 Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been
 opened.
 And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the
 way back.
 You cannot face it steadily, but this thing is sure,
 That time is no healer: the patient is no longer here.⁸⁵

The word engagement is important for it suggests the opposite of projection. A true private space is the engagement of two personal spaces, rather than a mutual projection of images and desires. Claverton, for all his skill at engaging, is unable to engage properly with any member of his family - with his wife and son not at all, nor with

those with whom he had come into close personal contact, Federico Gomez and Mrs. Carghill. Gomez' insistence on some kind of legitimate engagement forces Claverton to face his past - the engagements not written up in his books- his real personal space; and to face his family, products of his personal space; and to set up a few engagements, particularly with his son, which will last longer than an appointment on a busy afternoon:

GOMEZ

I've been trying to make clear that I only want
 your friendship!
 Just as it used to be in the old days
 When you taught me expensive tastes. Now it's my turn.
 I can have cigars sent direct to you from Cuba
 If your doctors allow you to smoke now and then.
 I'm a lonely man, Dick, with a craving for affection.
 All I want is as much of your company,
 So long as I stay here, as I can get.
 And the more I get, the longer I may stay.

[I, 621 - 629]

Claverton is of course in no condition for such engagements, for, being empty, he has no humanity to offer. Although Gomez and Carghill come as if ghosts from the past and are referred to as such, it is actually Claverton who is the ghost, and he knows it:

 Say rather, the exequies
 Of the failed successes, the successful failures,
 Who occupy positions that other men covet.
 When we go, a good many folk are mildly grieved,
 And our closest associates, the small minority
 Of those who really understand the place we filled
 Are inwardly delighted. They won't want my ghost
 Walking in the City or sitting in the Lords.
 And I, who recognise myself as a ghost
 Shan't want to be seen there. It makes me smile
 To think that men should be frightened of ghosts.
 If they only knew how frightened a ghost can be of men!

[I, 248 - 259]

Claverton is a ghost because his personal space is empty. His

personal space is empty because, in living off of his public image he has diverted the energy given him as a public man and as a father for the purposes of guiding the destiny of others and himself, into a mere glorification of himself. Claverton has virtually sucked his soul dry, and in doing so has turned himself into the exact opposite of Aeneas. Aeneas, in accepting his engagement with destiny, illustrated the third word, fatum, by which Virgil made his work amenable to the Christian world:

This is a word which constantly recurs in the Aeneid; a word charged with meaning, and perhaps with more meaning than Virgil himself knew. Our nearest word is 'destiny', and that is a word which means more than we can find any definitions for. It is a word which can have no meaning in a mechanical universe: if that which is wound up must run down, what destiny is there in that? Destiny is not necessitarianism, and it is not caprice: it is something essentially meaningful. Each man has his destiny, though some men are undoubtedly 'men of destiny' in a sense in which most men are not; and Aeneas is egregiously a man of destiny, since upon him the future of the Western World depends. But this is an election which cannot be explained, a burden and responsibility rather than a reason for self-glorification. It merely happens to one man and not to others, to have the gifts necessary in some profound crisis, but he can take no credit to himself for the gifts and the responsibility assigned to him. Some men have had a deep conviction of their destiny, and in that conviction have prospered; but when they cease to act as an instrument, and think of themselves as the active source of what they do, their pride is punished by disaster. Aeneas is a man guided by the deepest conviction of destiny, but he is a humble man who knows that this destiny is something not to be desired and not to be avoided. Of what power is he the servant? Not of the gods, who are themselves merely instruments, and sometimes rebellious ones. The concept of destiny leaves us with a mystery, but it is a mystery not contrary to reason, for it implies that the world, and the course of human history, have meaning.⁸⁶

Personal spaces, like personal destinies, are not easily ignored. Both the ghosts of the past and the ghost of the present must come to see themselves and each other as real people with feelings. Such recognition is understanding, and radiance, the putting of oneself in the other's place, as opposed to the projection of desires and needs.

Claverton learns to understand or engage through his son. He recognizes himself, even the very situations of embarrassment which Gomez and Carghill haunt him with, in his son's place. It is not a sympathetic understanding, for Claverton is not used to giving feelings as well as understanding, but it is a beginning.

Because Claverton has no sympathy to give to anyone, Gomez decides to take Michael instead of friendship. Michael, as son, is the symbol of Claverton's love, the whole personal space Claverton denied. In losing his son, Claverton achieves a detachment, a cauterization in reverse, which teaches him to feel:

LORD CLAVERTON

I cannot bar his way, as you know very well.
 Michael's a free agent. So if he chooses
 To place himself in your power, Fred Culverwell,
 Of his own volition to contract his enslavement,
 I cannot prevent him. I have something to say to you,
 Michael, before you go. I shall never repudiate you
 Though you repudiate me. I see now clearly
 The many many mistakes I have made
 My whole life through, mistake upon mistake,
 The mistaken attempts to correct mistakes
 By methods which proved to be equally mistaken.
 I see that your mother and I, in our failure
 To understand each other, both misunderstood you
 In our divergent ways. When I think of your childhood,
 When I think of the happy little boy who was Michael,
 When I think of your boyhood and adolescence,
 And see how all the efforts aimed at your good
 Only succeeded in defeating each other,
 How can I feel anything but sorrow and compunction?

[III, 384 - 402]

Michael, never having been taught feeling by his father, is oblivious to what his father is saying, and does not even react to this confession. Michael, as it were, inherits, like Harry in The Family Reunion, the family disease, which, in an age of public relations, is a social disease:

MONICA

Oh Father, Father, I'm so sorry!
 But perhaps, perhaps, Michael may learn his lesson.
 I believe he'll come back. If it's all a failure
 Homesickness, I'm sure will bring him back to us;
 If he prospers, that will give him confidence-
 It's only self-confidence that Michael is lacking.
 Oh Father, it's not you and me he rejects,
 But himself, the unhappy self that he's ashamed of.
 I'm sure he loves us.

[III, 480 - 488]

A further irony results in Claverton's understanding of his son, for Claverton learns an object lesson from Michael's departure and comes, as a result, to understand himself - to achieve a real personal space as opposed to an image:

LORD CLAVERTON

And Michael -
 I love him, even for rejecting me,
 For the me he rejected, I reject also.
 I've been freed from the self that pretends to be someone;
 And in becoming no one, I begin to live.
 It is worth while dying, to find out what life is.
 And I love you, my daughter, the more truly for knowing
 That there is someone you love more than your father-
 That you love and are loved. And now that I love Michael,
 I think, for the first time - remember, my dear,
 I am only a beginner in the practice of loving -
 Well, that is something.

I shall leave you for a while.
 This is your first visit to us at Badgley Court,
 Charles, and not at all what you were expecting.
 I am sorry you have had to see so much of persons
 And situations not very agreeable.
 You two ought to have a little time together.
 I leave Monica to you. Look after her, Charles,
 Now and always. I shall take a stroll.

[III, 527 - 555]

Claverton at last finds happiness in knowing that someone he loves is happy. He is a King Lear with eyes, and the eyes have the look of eyes looking at roses.

Public, private, and personal spaces, then, form the surface

world of Eliot's urban morality plays. These spaces present the environment against which certain individuals must struggle to maintain their integrity, and, indeed, simply to go on living a significant life, or to die a meaningful death. Underneath this visible surface, there lies a pattern which can only be detected, as it were, out of the corner of the eye or peripherally. This pattern continues the work of Sweeney Agonistes and Murder in the Cathedral. It is a rhythmic interpretation of the contemporary world. Although there are variations or refinements in this sub-surface pattern from play to play, the pattern nevertheless retains a basic unity. Each play repeats the same verse rhythm, re-enacts the same redemptive ritual, and in doing so presents the same mythic interpretation (from different points of view) of contemporary man's struggle with the environment. Martin Browne described the genesis of this repetition from play to play. What he said of The Family Reunion and The Cocktail Party by very obvious extension applies similarly to The Confidential Clerk and The Elder Statesman:

The Cocktail Party followed two years after this second production and ten years after the completion of The Family Reunion. Even allowing for the gulf of the war, the nature of the impact which this play made is still surprising; for the first of its author's modern works had already made clear enough the direction in which he was heading. In the new play he moved a long way nearer to the style of the naturalistic stage. He carried the climactic experience of the hero of The Family Reunion onwards to show its results and its effects on those around his heroine in The Cocktail Party. In the process he discarded the Chorus, and almost surrendered his beloved 'runes'. Yet essentially the form is the same and the drama is as deeply poetic; the purport of the story is the same also, and as disturbing to all those who do not wish to go the author's way. The difference in effect is that, when that disturbance takes place, The Cocktail Party gives the audience no chance to insulate itself from the play's influence by saying to itself that it cannot recognize the characters or their situation as akin to its own.⁸⁷

As well, Browne's statement that the verse rhythm of The Cocktail Party (and, by implication, that of the other plays) "is meant to act upon the subconscious of the audience as a pulse which binds the play together and suggests that the individual relationships which make up the plot conceal a universal idea," indicates the extent to which the ritual and myth of Eliot's naturalistic plays are derived from their rhythm.⁸⁸

Because, as Eliot has so often pointed out, the basis of his verse rhythm is that of everyday speech, it would be possible to suggest that the ritual and myth which develop out of that rhythm are everyday rituals and myths.⁸⁹ If so, these are not everyday rituals and myths in the same sense that the naturalistic surface of the plays might be called everyday. In the first place, the rhythm is structured, no matter how everyday it may seem, as Browne's description of its use in The Family Reunion indicates:

A verse-form has been created capable of including every kind of contemporary speech, from the banal conversation of a drawing room at tea-time to the revelations of the heart's depth and the terror of eternal things. It is based on four main stresses to a line, with a complete flexibility in the number of syllables: the rhythm is strongly trochaic with many dactyls interspersed: there is a definite caesura, and the end of the line invariably has significance. The form, therefore, though appearing loose at first reading, is in reality closely knit, and should impose its discipline naturally on a sensitive actor. This verse is dramatic in the true sense, that the form of the verse heightens the tension and sharpens the characterization.⁹⁰

The rituals which develop out of this verse-rhythm are everyday rituals only in a very subtle way: they are everyday rituals of any civilization, not just of the twentieth-century civilization to which their naturalistic surface belongs. In effect, these rituals would permit of a Roman, or an Egyptian, or a Papuan style production of the plays,

rather than simply of a Shaftesbury Avenue style to which they have been unfortunately but deliberately limited.

Of course, a Grecian style production of the plays, complete with masks and cosmic gestures would be interesting, particularly because of the classical Greek dramas which Eliot used as "points of departure" for his plays. But it must be emphasized that the rituals and myths of the plays are not Greek rituals and myths. Eliot did not use Greek drama as an instrument of interpretation of the twentieth century in the same way, say, that he used the martyrdom of Thomas Becket in Murder in the Cathedral. Had he done so his plays would have used Greek-style rhythms and would have been set in a classical style. The parallel of that classical style with the contemporary world would then have revealed the interpretation of the contemporary world which Eliot was aiming at. No such easy interpretation is, however, available. A perusal of the plot parallels of Eliot's plays with the Greek counterparts as outlined by David Jones shows how little the Greek plays reveal about that understanding of the contemporary world which Eliot was creating.⁹¹ Indeed, where the parallels are the closest, in The Family Reunion, the interpretation Eliot was after became confused, as he himself pointed out:

INTERVIEWER

Do you have a Greek model behind The Elder Statesman?

ELIOT

The play in the background is the Oedipus at Colonus. But I wouldn't like to refer to my Greek originals as models. I have always regarded them more as points of departure. That was one of the weaknesses of The Family Reunion; it was rather too close to the Eumenides. I tried to follow my original too literally and in that way led to confusion by mixing pre-Christian and post-Christian attitudes about matters of conscience and sin and guilt.

So in the subsequent three I have tried to take the Greek myth as a sort of springboard, you see. After all, what one gets essential and permanent, I think, in the old plays, is a situation. You can take the situation, rethink it in modern terms, develop your own characters from it, and let another plot develop out of that. Actually you get further and further away from the original. The Cocktail Party had to do with Alcestis simply because the question arose in my mind, what would the life of Admetus and Alcestis be, after she'd come back from the dead; I mean if there'd been a break like that, it couldn't go on just as before. Those two people were the center of the thing when I started and the other characters only developed out of it. The character of Celia, who came to be really the most important character in the play, was originally an appendage to a domestic situation.⁹²

Finally, of course, the almost complete alteration of character personalities in Eliot's plays makes even plot similarities with the Greek originals of accidental rather than substantial interest in outlining the basic peripheral pattern of the plays. What is of importance, however, is why Eliot used the Greek models at all - a question to be answered in a discussion of the myth which the plays' ritual pattern presents. First, that ritual pattern must be outlined.

If the rhythm which the plays use can be considered an everyday rhythm, in the sense of a kind of permanent everyday that might pertain to any civilization of any age, then the ritual which develops, in the plays, out of that rhythm is a permanent everyday ritual. It is a ritual which explores universal human relationships. It discovers a set of badly-established relationships and renders them compatible. Each play re-enacts this ritual with a degree of complexity slightly greater than its predecessor. Where Murder in the Cathedral discovered a single relationship, that of Becket with the a-temporal, The Family Reunion discovers a set of descending relationships. The parental spaces must be adjusted to the filial spaces. The Cocktail Party in turn reveals two sets of horizontal relationships,

two sets of public, private, and personal spaces which belong to people of the same generation. While the personal space of Harry in The Family Reunion is endangered by the interference of his parents' private space, the private space of Edward and Lavinia in The Cocktail Party is endangered by their respective personal spaces which have secretly established pseudo-private spaces with other people. The private space which Edward, for instance, sets up with Celia, is pseudo or false, for each person is using the other to satisfy the needs of his own personal space. The personal space tries to devour its partner whom it treats as an object or projection of something emotional that it wants.

The Confidential Clerk re-enacts the same ritual with a greater degree of complexity by combining the descending or vertical set of spaces of The Family Reunion with the horizontal set of spaces of The Cocktail Party. On the horizontal line, Sir Claude and Lady Elizabeth learn to share a private space, while on the vertical, Colby establishes a satisfactory set of parental relationships, as does Lucasta, who is enabled to share a private space with B. Kaghan. The Elder Statesman similarly establishes legitimate horizontal spaces between Lord Claverton and Federico Gomez, between Lord Claverton, again, and Mrs. Carghill. As well, an honest, if not satisfactory, relationship is established on the vertical line between Lord Claverton and his son Michael. The Elder Statesman also adds a degree of complexity to the ritual by creating an ascending as well as a descending action on the vertical line. Monica and Charles, whose private space remains constant throughout the play, come to the assistance of Lord

Claverton, Monica's father.

In the case of each play the ritual involves the same basic elements: a set of hidden relationships, a set of projections which reinforce those hidden relationships, and a revelation of the hidden relationships which terminates the unbearable projections. The projections themselves are perhaps a kind of key to the mystery of the hidden relationships. Harry in The Family Reunion projects the Eumenides - who, because they are represented in cocktail dress, suggest that Harry has responsibilities outside of his immediate family and in the world of society. He finds peace when he leaves his family to establish some role in that world. Celia projects an image of admiration, perhaps a father-image, onto Edward (who, in turn, has perhaps projected a daughter-image onto Celia). Her preoccupation with wonder is satisfied in the service of the Church. Sir Claude, in The Confidential Clerk, projects a son-image onto Colby, who is freed to be himself when that image is removed. Lord Claverton projects an image of greatness (again perhaps a father-image) onto himself. Through the filter of that image, he projects his guilt onto those who threaten that image. By allowing them to destroy that image he is freed to be himself. In every case the presence of projections suggest there is a need either for the parents who have children to take a different attitude toward them, or for people who have no children to have them. This may seem a somewhat remote and unpoetic (and therefore undramatic) point for a ritual by T.S. Eliot to make, except that it fits in with his moralist position, and that it suggests that the creation of life is, after all, a fit object for a creator of poetic

drama. Ultimately, the peripheral pattern or basic ritual of the plays is simply Sweeney's "Birth, and copulation, and death". When the characters oppose this ritual by co-operating with the attractions of the surface world of Secularism they are in trouble. When they accept this ritual and choose to struggle against their consuming environment they have a chance of happiness.

In essence, when each character Eliot created discovers and accepts the everyday ritual of "Birth, and copulation, and death" he achieves a very important knowledge of himself. Self-knowledge was, in fact, Eliot's motivation for the use of Greek drama in his own drama. In the middle of his career he implied, somewhat indirectly, that one virtue of studying the Classics was self-knowledge. After suggesting that liberalism had emasculated the Classics by giving all subjects of study equal value, he went on to describe how radicalism had come to ignore the Classics altogether:

Radicalism then proceeds to organize the 'vital issues', and reject what is not vital. A modern literary critic, who has gained considerable publicity by Marxist criticism of literature, has told us that the real men of our time are such as the Lenins, Trotskys, Gorkys and Stalins; also the Einsteins, Plancks and Hunt Morgans. To this critic knowledge means 'primarily scientific knowledge of the world about us and of ourselves'. This statement might be given a respectable interpretation; but I am afraid that the critic meant only what the man in the street means. By 'scientific knowledge of the world about us' he does not mean understanding of life. By scientific knowledge of ourselves he does not mean self-knowledge.⁹³

To use the Latin and Greek Classics, and indeed, Christian literature as well, as starting points for rituals whereby the citizen of the modern metropolis could achieve knowledge of himself as a created creator of life was quite an obvious thing for Eliot to do. Self-knowledge included knowledge of the culture out of which one was

created and that culture was both classical and Christian. To use the Classics as points of departure was, metaphorically, to begin with one's origins:

My appeal can only address itself to those who already accept the contention that the preservation of a living literature is more than a matter of interest only to amateurs of verse and readers of novels; and who see in it the preservation of developed speech, and of civilization against barbarism. They will be those also who appreciate the need, if the present chaos is ever to be reduced to order, of something more than an administrative or an economic unification - the need of a cultural unification in diversity of Europe; and who believe that a new unity can only grow out of the old roots: the Christian Faith, and the classical languages which Europeans inherit in common. These roots are, I think, inextricably intertwined.⁹⁴

Given such an argument it is not hard to understand why both classical and Christian mythology should be so closely associated in Eliot's plays, and why this association should have been the constant and belaboured object of scholarship such as that of Carol Smith or David Jones. However, to concentrate on the sources or points of departure is to ignore the subsequent development. Self-knowledge must be obtained in that modern condition in which the person desperately in need of unity finds himself.

The central myth which Eliot's naturalistic plays deal with is the discovery by a man of his role as a creator of life, a discovery which must be made by overcoming the distractions of the secular world, the environment of the modern city. Such a discovery implies that the adult relates to his children directly, and does not project images (usually parental) onto them. As well, the adult must relate to other adults as such, and not project father- or mother-images onto them. In this way, the channels for emotional growth, as important in the creation of life as is physical growth, are not closed off, and the ultimate

unity of the individual can be achieved. Such a unity would in turn make possible the spiritual growth of the individual. Eliot's plays, however, leave off, each time, at the point where the individual begins his spiritual growth. Eliot was primarily concerned with the channels of emotional development of the individual, and, to say this is to say that Eliot was primarily concerned with education. Education, in turn, meant for Eliot that kind of personal development which resulted in good citizens. Such education came through the family. If one keeps in mind, while reading the following passage, the various family struggles, the transgressions of personal, private, and public space, the emotional projections in Eliot's plays, it would seem that Eliot clearly had in mind the family of the modern city as a potential producer of good citizens when he was writing his plays:

It seems to me that we may raise the question, how far good citizenship can be an aim of a curriculum of education. To a large extent, surely, it must be the product of a training which is not consciously aimed at anything so comprehensive, and at the same time so narrowly defined as citizenship. The habits of accepting authority, of being able to exercise responsible freedom, of being able to exercise authority when compelled to assume it, are acquired unconsciously in early years. If parents are public-spirited people whose interests are not selfishly limited to themselves and their family, children will learn from their example (for the unconscious influence of parents is much more influential than their precepts) that they have a duty towards their neighbors, involving the assumption of responsibility and the exercise of self-control. And in so far as their mental capacities permit, they will learn that this duty involves not merely habitual responses, but thinking and making deliberate choices. In a school, they will learn adaptation to a larger community; and in a college, develop their public sense further in societies and voluntary activities.⁹⁵

A good citizen, of course, meant someone who was good as well as a citizen. The dramatic struggle against Secular, city environments, the very give, sympathize, and control which induced Eliot to take his poetry from the level of reflective image to the level of action,

and so to convert the language-emotion-morality complex of his theories into the rhythm-ritual-myth complex of his plays, was all aimed, both consciously and unconsciously, at the creation of a conscience for the city:

Education for citizenship, then, seems to mean first of all the developing of social conscience; and I have already suggested that 'social' conscience can only be a development of 'conscience': the moment we talk about 'social conscience' and forget conscience, we are in moral danger - just as 'social justice' must be based upon 'justice'. The separation in our minds which results simply from dwelling constantly upon the adjective 'social' may lead to crimes as well as errors. In the name of social justice we can excuse, or justify to ourselves, or simply ignore, injustice: in the name of social conscience we can do the same by conscience. The same sort of substitutions can occur with the word 'democracy'. 'Social democracy' sounds at first a phrase to which no one could object; but the denotation can be so manipulated that it can be made to point to something which to most of us, I think, may be anything but 'democratic'.⁹⁶

It is, perhaps, significant that Eliot, who, by his almost eccentric respect for the personal and private spaces of others - and particularly of himself, and by his exercising of social responsibility in the public space through his writings, certainly tried to project the image of the good man of letters in the city, concluded the essay in which the above remarks on conscience occurred, by quoting in translation a passage, by Gustave Thibon, inspired by Simone Weil whose idealistic nationalism Eliot much admired. The passage in so many ways summarizes the struggles which Eliot himself endured, and the struggles he explored in his plays, that it is a fitting conclusion to the present work:

'The soul devoted to the pursuit of the absolutely good meets in this world with insoluble contradictions. "Our life is impossibility, absurdity. Everything that we will is contradicted by the conditions or by the consequences attached to it. That is because we are ourselves contradiction, being merely creatures . . ." If, for example, you have innumerable children: that tends to bring about overpopulation and war (the typical case is Japan). If you improve the material

conditions of the people: you risk spiritual deterioration. If you devote yourself utterly to some person - you cease to exist for that person. Only imaginary goods imply no contradiction: the girl who desires a large family, the social reformer who dreams of the happiness of the people - such individuals do not encounter any obstacle so long as they refrain from action. They sail along happily in a good which is absolute, but fictitious: to stumble against reality is the signal for waking up. This contradiction, the mark of our wretchedness and our greatness, is something that we must accept in all its bitterness.⁹⁷

FOOTNOTES

References to line numbers of a work are given in the text only when that work is the central text or one of the central texts of the chapter in which the quotation is made. In Chapter One, quotations from The Waste Land are from The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot (London: Faber, 1969). In Chapter Four, quotations from Sweeney Agonistes are from the more readable The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962); quotations from The Rock are from the original edition as listed in the Bibliography; and quotations from Murder in the Cathedral are from Murder in the Cathedral, ed. by Coghill (London: Faber, 1965). In Chapter Five, quotations for each of the central plays are from: The Family Reunion (London: Faber, 1963); The Cocktail Party (London: Faber, 1958); The Confidential Clerk (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1954); and The Elder Statesman (London: Faber, 1959). In each case the text has been chosen for its ready availability and convenience in line numbering. The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot (London: Faber, 1969) has been used to cross-check the quotations, except for those from The Rock for which, unfortunately, there has been only the one edition available. Quotations from The Waste Land have been cross-checked with the original version of the poem published in The Criterion (1.1) which presents a few interesting variations from later editions for the avid textual scholar.

Chapter One

¹Eliot, After Strange Gods, 16-17.

²Miller, The Disappearance of God, 4.

³Eliot, "What Dante Means to Me", 126.

⁴Dobree, "T.S. Eliot: A Personal Reminisce", 67.

⁵Eliot, "What Dante Means to Me", 128.

⁶See above, page one.

⁷Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth", 483.

⁸Eliot, "London Letter" (71.4) 453.

⁹Lynch, The Image of the City, 8.

¹⁰Knoll, Storm over "The Waste Land", passim.

- ¹¹Eliot, "Eeldrop and Appleplex", passim.
- ¹²Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", 52.
- ¹³Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 118-119.
- ¹⁴Eliot, "London Letter" (70.6) 691. Eliot has here used a variant of the original Commedia lines which inspired lines 412-417 of The Waste Land. See also Eliot's footnote to these lines.
- ¹⁵Lethaby, Architecture, Nature and Magic, 23. This book is reprinted from Architecture, Mysticism and Myth (London: Percival, 1892). Wyndham Lewis, in The Caliph's Design, 23ff., points to Lethaby as the only architect of significance at the time.
- ¹⁶Eliot, The Waste Land (1969) 218 n.
- ¹⁷Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", 163.
- ¹⁸Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 25.
- ¹⁹Eliot, "Leibniz's Monads and Bradley's Finite Centers", 572.
- ²⁰McLuhan, The Mechanical Bride, passim.
- ²¹See above, n. 16.
- ²²Eliot, "Leibniz's Monads and Bradley's Finite Centers", 575.
- ²³Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 311.
- ²⁴Eliot, "The Music of Poetry", 23.
- ²⁵Gallup, "The 'Lost' Manuscripts of T.S. Eliot", 1239.
- ²⁶Eliot, "Little Gidding", l. 127.
- ²⁷Eliot, "The Lesson of Baudelaire", 4.
- ²⁸Eliot, "Preludes", ll. 40-41.
- ²⁹Eliot, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", ll. 8-9. See below, pages 109-112.
- ³⁰Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", ll. 8-10.
- ³¹Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", ll. 6-7.
- ³²Eliot, "Morning at the Window", ll. 1.

- ³³Eliot, The Rock [Chorus I, 19-21], 7-8.
- ³⁴Eliot, "Portrait of a Lady", l. 92.
- ³⁵Eliot, "The Hollow Men", ll. 52-56.
- ³⁶Eliot, "Burnt Norton", ll. 99-103.
- ³⁷Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", ll. 2-3.
- ³⁸Eliot, "East Coker", l. 122.
- ³⁹Eliot, "Burnt Norton", ll. 43, 99-100.
- ⁴⁰Eliot, "East Coker", ll. 101-109.
- ⁴¹Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", ll. 42-43.
- ⁴²Eliot, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", ll. 16-22.
- ⁴³Eliot, "Preludes", ll. 41-42.
- ⁴⁴Eliot, "The Boston Evening Transcript", ll. 1-2.
- ⁴⁵Eliot, "Preludes", ll. 21-23.

Chapter Two

- ¹Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 25.
- ²Eliot, "Baudelaire", 425-426.
- ³Eliot, "Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry", 50.
- ⁴These remarks parody Eliot's position as Royalist, Classicist, and Anglo-Catholic which he enunciated in his introduction to For Lancelot Andrewes, ix.
- ⁵Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 25.
- ⁶Eliot, "A Commentary" (13.52) 453.
- ⁷Eliot, "Baudelaire", 421-422.
- ⁸Eliot, "Baudelaire", 428-429.
- ⁹Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", 163. See above, page 16.

¹⁰Eliot, "Baudelaire", 430. Eliot here has quoted from T.E. Hulme, Speculations, 47. Hulme's preceeding paragraph has elaborated on what is meant by "absolute values": "The religious attitude: . . . Its first postulate is the impossibility I discussed earlier, of expressing the absolute values of religion and ethics in terms of the essentially relative categories of life. . . . Ethical values are not relative to human desires and feelings, but absolute and objective. . . . Religion supplements this . . . by its conception of Perfection." (47).

¹¹Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 109. It should be noted that in his Preface to Elizabethan Dramatists Eliot rejected inclusion of "Four Elizabethan Dramatists" into that volume, as well as "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", and "Hamlet and his Problems", on the grounds of their "callowness" and "facility of unqualified assertion which verges, here and there, on impudence" (5). These grounds, however, did not result in the deletion of the same essays from Selected Essays, nor did Eliot indicate that the principles enunciated in those essays lacked importance to him in the development of his dramatic theory and practise.

¹²See above, page 19.

¹³Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", 162.

¹⁴Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 111.

¹⁵Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 72.

¹⁶Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 70-71.

¹⁷Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 68.

¹⁸Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", 165.

¹⁹Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 94-95.

²⁰Eliot, "Rhetoric and Poetic Drama", 38-39.

²¹Eliot, "Philip Massinger", 209.

²²Eliot, "Philip Massinger", 210.

²³Eliot, "Philip Massinger", 211.

²⁴Eliot, "John Marston", 229.

²⁵Eliot, "John Marston", 229.

- ²⁶Eliot, "John Marston", 232.
- ²⁷See above, page four.
- ²⁸See above, pages 25-26.
- ²⁹Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 93. See below, pages 182-187.
- ³⁰Eliot, "John Marston", 229-230.
- ³¹Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", 137.
- ³²Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", 137-138.
- ³³Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", 135.
- ³⁴Eliot, "John Ford", 202-203.
- ³⁵Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", 169. When this essay was published in Eliot's earlier volume, For Lancelot Andrewes, the words, "without personality.", concluded this passage.
- ³⁶Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 78.
- ³⁷Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 83-84.
- ³⁸Eliot, "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation", 79.
- ³⁹Eliot, "Cyril Tourneur", 190.
- ⁴⁰Eliot, "Cyril Tourneur", 190.
- ⁴¹Eliot, "Cyril Tourneur", 190.
- ⁴²Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 34-35.
- ⁴³Eliot, "Cyril Tourneur", 189.
- ⁴⁴Eliot, "Philip Massinger", 214.
- ⁴⁵Eliot, "Philip Massinger", 213-214.
- ⁴⁶Eliot, "John Ford", 196.
- ⁴⁷Eliot, "Philip Massinger", 212.
- ⁴⁸Eliot, "Ben Jonson", 157-158.
- ⁴⁹Eliot, "Ben Jonson", 155.

- ⁵⁰Eliot, "Ben Jonson", 156.
- ⁵¹Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", 139-140.
- ⁵²Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca", 129-131.
- ⁵³Eliot, "'Rhetoric' and Poetic drama", 40.
- ⁵⁴Eliot, "Thomas Heywood", 180.
- ⁵⁵Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 116-117.
- ⁵⁶Eliot, "Thomas Middleton", 162-163. See above, pages 15-16.
- ⁵⁷Eliot, "Ben Jonson", 159-160.
- ⁵⁸Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 51-52.
- ⁵⁹The Encyclopaedia Britannica: Eleventh Edition, XIX, 87.
- ⁶⁰The Encyclopaedia Britannica: Eleventh Edition, XIX, 87-88.
- ⁶¹See above, page 26.
- ⁶²Isaacs, An Assessment of Twentieth Century Literature, 147.
- ⁶³See above, pages 30 and 44-45.
- ⁶⁴Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 112.
- ⁶⁵Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 112-113.
- ⁶⁶Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 113-114.
- ⁶⁷Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 111. See above, page 30.
- ⁶⁸Eliot, "Four Elizabethan Dramatists", 113.
- ⁶⁹Eliot, "The Possibility of a Poetic Drama", 70. This essay makes many of the above points in more detail, but, as the quotation in hand would seem to indicate, the essay is somewhat unusually vindictive.
- ⁷⁰Eliot, "The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism", 4.
- ⁷¹See above, Eliot's definition of myth, page three.
- ⁷²Eliot, "The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism", 4.

⁷³See above, page 35.

⁷⁴Eliot, "The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism", 4.

⁷⁵Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 456.

⁷⁶Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 458.

⁷⁷Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 457-458.

⁷⁸Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 458.

⁷⁹Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 457.

⁸⁰Eliot, "The Need for Poetic Drama", 994.

⁸¹Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 458-459.

⁸²Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 458.

⁸³Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 458. See also, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 35.

⁸⁴Eliot, "Catholicism and International Order", 125.

⁸⁵Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 459.

⁸⁶Eliot, "A Commentary" (15.58) 65-69. See also: "War-paint and Feathers", 1036; "Catholicism and International Order", 123; and, The Idea of a Christian Society, 30 and 62.

⁸⁷Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 459.

⁸⁸Eliot, "A Commentary" (11.45) 679.

⁸⁹Eliot, "A Commentary" (11.45) 682.

⁹⁰Eliot, "A Commentary" (10.38) 3-4.

⁹¹Eliot, "The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism", 4.

⁹²See above, page 25.

Chapter Three

¹See above, page 16.

²Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 32.

³Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 154.

⁴Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 152-153.

⁵Eliot, "The Social Function of Poetry", 9-10.

⁶See above, page two.

⁷Eliot, "A Commentary" (14.57) 611.

⁸Eliot, "Francis Herbert Bradley", 455.

⁹Eliot, Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley, 455.

¹⁰Pound, "Date Line", 77.

¹¹Eliot, "Lancelot Andrewes", 347-348.

¹²Eliot, "Lancelot Andrewes", 344.

¹³Eliot, "The Music of Poetry", 24. See also: Donald Hall, "The Art of Poetry I: T.S. Eliot", 67-69; and, Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 20.

¹⁴Eliot, "The Social Function of Poetry", 15-16.

¹⁵See above, page 16.

¹⁶Eliot, "Catholicism and International Order", 134.

¹⁷See above, pages 27-28.

¹⁸Stravinsky, "Memories of T.S. Eliot", 93.

¹⁹Eliot, "Introduction", to Nightwood, 5-6.

²⁰Eliot, "Catholicism and International Order", 119. This passage is quoted in fuller context below, pages 166-167.

²¹Eliot, "Francis Herbert Bradley", 452-453.

²²Eliot, "A Commentary" (13.52) 453.

²³Richards, "A Background for Contemporary Poetry", 511-528.

²⁴Eliot, For Lancelot Andrewes, ix.

²⁵Eliot, "Dante", 269-271.

²⁶Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 129-135.

²⁷Eliot, "A Note on Poetry and Belief", 15.

²⁸Eliot, "A Note on Poetry and Belief", 15.

²⁹Eliot, "A Note on Poetry and Belief", 16.

³⁰Eliot, "A Note on Poetry and Belief", 16-17.

³¹Eliot, "Poetry and Propaganda", 107.

³²Eliot, "A Commentary" (12.49) 647.

³³Pound, "To the Editor of 'The Criterion'", 128.

³⁴Eliot, "A Commentary" (13.50) 120.

³⁵Eliot, After Strange Gods, 12.

³⁶Eliot, After Strange Gods, 42.

³⁷See above, pages 50-51.

³⁸Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", 59.

³⁹Eliot, After Strange Gods, 62-63.

⁴⁰Eliot, After Strange Gods, 42-43. Perhaps the "modern mind" that Eliot describes here is the same as that to which he was referring in the title of the last lecture of The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism. E. Martin Browne records an early manuscript of The Confidential Clerk in The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 262-263, from which the following passage makes very whimsical reference to the criticism of the use of "types":

S[lingsby]. That's not true. You interest me very much.
I've never known anybody like you.

L[ucasta]. The smallest compliments thankfully received.
I suppose you'll say next, I'm an interesting type.
Well, if I'm a type, that's not very interesting.

S.No, I don't regard you as a type.
One knows by instinct when a person's not a type,

Even when one doesn't know the type
To which they would belong if they were typical.

L. What a lovely way of putting it. Wonderfully highbrow.
I dare say it has no meaning, but I like it.
Well, I can return the humble compliment:
I [sic] never known anyone like you, either.
And I'm sure you're not a type. You're too odd a fish for that.

⁴¹Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest" (4.21) 500.

⁴²Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest" (4.21) 500.

⁴³Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest" (4.21) 500.

⁴⁴Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest" (4.21) 500.

⁴⁵Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest" (4.21) 500.

⁴⁶Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Mare's Nest" (4.21) 500.

⁴⁷Pound, "Date Line", 76-77. Originally published in Make it New, 1934.

⁴⁸Eliot, "[a Review of] The Name and Nature of Poetry by A.E. Housman", 152.

⁴⁹Pound, "Mr. Housman at Little Bethel", 218.

⁵⁰Eliot, "Mr. Eliot's Virginian Lectures" (4.22) 528.

⁵¹Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Quandaries" (4.24) 559.

⁵²Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Quandaries" (4.24) 559.

⁵³Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Quandaries" (4.24) 559.

⁵⁴Eliot, "Mr. T.S. Eliot's Quandaries" (4.26) 622. See also, The Idea of a Christian Society, 32-33.

⁵⁵Pound, "Mr. T.S. Eliot's Quandaries" (5.2) 48.

⁵⁶Eliot, "Modern Heresies" (5.3) 71.

⁵⁷Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Looseness" (5.4) 96.

⁵⁸Pound, "Mr. Eliot's Looseness" (5.4) 96.

⁵⁹Eliot, "Religion and Literature", 398.

⁶⁰Eliot, "Religion and Literature", 400. See also, The Idea of a Christian Society, 25, 41 and 68.

⁶¹Eliot, "A Commentary" (15.61) 667-668.

⁶²Eliot, "A Commentary" (16.62) 67-68. See also, The Idea of a Christian Society, 72-74.

⁶³Eliot, "Thoughts after Lambeth", 363-387.

⁶⁴Eliot, "Poetry and Propaganda", 97-107.

⁶⁵Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 130.

⁶⁶Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 131.

⁶⁷Eliot, "Observations", 69. See also, "Wyndham Lewis", 167-170.

⁶⁸Lewis, The Caliph's Design, 35.

⁶⁹Eliot, "Tarr", 106.

⁷⁰Lewis, Men without Art, 10.

⁷¹Lewis, Men without Art, 13-14.

⁷²Lewis, Men without Art, 12.

⁷³Richards, "A Background for Contemporary Poetry", 518.

⁷⁴Richards, "A Background for Contemporary Poetry", 520.

⁷⁵Lewis, Men without Art, 94.

⁷⁶Lewis, Men without Art, 77-78.

⁷⁷Lewis, Men without Art, 72. The quotation is from Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", 52-53. For similar remarks by Eliot see After Strange Gods, 62-63, and also, "The Possibility of a Poetic Drama", 69.

⁷⁸Lewis, Men without Art, 74-75.

⁷⁹Lewis, Men without Art, 88.

⁸⁰Lewis, Men without Art, 88.

⁸¹See above, page 27.

⁸²Lewis, Men without Art, 89-90.

- ⁸³Lewis, Men without Art, 91.
- ⁸⁴Hall, "The Art of Poetry I: T.S. Eliot", 62.
- ⁸⁵Gallup, T.S. Eliot: A Bibliography, 51-52.
- ⁸⁶Lewis, Men without Art, 136.
- ⁸⁷Lewis, Men without Art, 108.
- ⁸⁸Lewis, Men without Art, 109.
- ⁸⁹Lewis, Men without Art, 113.
- ⁹⁰Lewis, Men without Art, 115-116.
- ⁹¹Eliot, "A Commentary" (11.45) 681.
- ⁹²Lewis, Men without Art, 40.
- ⁹³Lewis, Men without Art, 149.
- ⁹⁴Lewis, Men without Art, 150.
- ⁹⁵Lewis, Men without Art, 152-153.
- ⁹⁶Lewis, Men without Art, 153.
- ⁹⁷Lewis, Men without Art, 153-154.
- ⁹⁸Lewis, Men without Art, 183.
- ⁹⁹Lewis, Men without Art, 183.

Chapter Four

- ¹See above, page 53.
- ²Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum", 12.
- ³Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum", 12.
- ⁴Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 155.
- ⁵Eliot, "Little Gidding", 11. 185-187.
- ⁶Lewis, Time and Western Man, 53-54.

⁷Lewis, Time and Western Man, 5.

⁸Eliot, "Introduction", to Savonarola, xi.

⁹Eliot, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night", l. 9, and, for example, ll. 14-16, 34-35, 47-50, 69-70, and especially ll. 74-78.

¹⁰Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 119.

¹¹Smith, T.S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, 65. Smith makes an important point here. She suggests that Eliot borrowed the name, Pereira, from a prominent doctor: "The symbolic identity of this cryptic character is, I believe, important to the meaning of the whole work. His name is significant; Pereira is a medicine made from the bark of a Brazilian tree and used to mitigate or remove fever. It was named after a famous London professor of materia medica, Jonathan Pereira (1804 - 1853). Cornford discusses the role of the doctor as the ritualistic agent for the rejuvenation of the dead god." Eliot, himself, comments on the relationship between the fool and the doctor in "The Beating of a Drum", ll. According to Eliot the doctor-fool figure indicates a common origin for tragedy and comedy. See also below, pages 142-143 and 212-213, as well as Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 44.

¹²Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum", 12.

¹³Eliot, "Introduction", to Savonarola, viii.

¹⁴See above, page three.

¹⁵Smith, T.S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, 32-75.

¹⁶Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, 103.

¹⁷See above, page three.

¹⁸Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 41.

¹⁹Eliot, "Euripedes and Professor Murray", 77.

²⁰O'Brien, "Apeneck Sweeney", 86-93.

²¹O'Brien, "Apeneck Sweeney", 87.

²²O'Brien, "Apeneck Sweeney", 91-93.

²³Walsh, ed., "Craobhsgaoileadh Chlainne Suibhne", 28-30.

²⁴See above, page 65.

²⁵Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, 153-154.

²⁶Eliot, "A Commentary" (12.49) 644. See also, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 29-34.

²⁷See also, Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 30.

²⁸Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 93.

²⁹Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", 98.

³⁰Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", 98.

³¹Browne, "From The Rock to The Confidential Clerk", 57.

³²Browne, "From The Rock to The Confidential Clerk", 56.

³³Eliot, "Marie Lloyd", 458.

³⁴Browne, "From The Rock to The Confidential Clerk", 58. See also, Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", 99.

³⁵Eliot, The Rock, 7. Because the lines of this edition are not numbered, and because much of the play is written in prose, references to The Rock are to the page number rather than to a line number.

³⁶Eliot, The Rock, 7.

³⁷This was Martin Browne's idea. See his, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 8-9.

³⁸Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 9.

³⁹Eliot, The Rock, 67-68.

⁴⁰Eliot, The Rock, 65.

⁴¹Eliot, The Rock, 46.

⁴²Eliot, The Rock, 85.

⁴³Eliot, "Religion without Humanism", 107.

⁴⁴Eliot, The Rock, 42.

⁴⁵Eliot, The Rock, 43.

⁴⁶See above, pages 81-82.

⁴⁷Eliot, The Rock, 47. See below, page 163.

⁴⁸Eliot, The Rock, 51.

⁴⁹Eliot, "Religion without Humanism", 110.

⁵⁰Eliot, The Rock, 82. Compare Eliot's remarks on A.R. Orage in "A Commentary" (14.55) 260-264.

⁵¹Eliot, "A Commentary" (14.54) 88. See also, Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 3 and 16.

⁵²See Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 17.

⁵³Eliot, "Five Points on Dramatic Writing", 10.

⁵⁴Smith, T.S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, 24.

⁵⁵Hoellering, "Filming Murder in the Cathedral", 83-84.

⁵⁶Eliot and Hoellering, The Film of Murder in the Cathedral, 117.

⁵⁷Eliot, "Introduction", to Savonarola, vii. See also, The Idea of a Christian Society, 60.

⁵⁸Eliot, "Introduction", to Savonarola, ix.

⁵⁹Eliot, "Introduction", to Savonarola, ix-x. In a review by Michael Sayers of the initial West End production of Murder in the Cathedral Eliot somewhat ironically received his come-uppance for his attack on Shaw: "Of course this is the theme of Catholicism - the Individual as the end of the universe. Each personality, each soul, alone with God like some precious trifle in a museum-case. God's own museum-pieces, ticketed from baptism, placed in our various cases, on show to eternity. In art it becomes a static exhibition. Thomas à Becket is exhibited by Mr. Eliot (possibly I should say, Mr. Eliot is exhibited by Thomas à Becket), and personally I find him a bit of a bore. I think the audiences agree with me for I notice that they rouse themselves for the first time during the performance of this piece upon the entrance of the Shavian knights. Thomas himself is a bore most of the time, a perfect bore in his way, a finished and polished and consummate bore, but a bore all the same like any objet d'art without a history, without a definite temporal and spiritual locale. True enough, the sort of psychic catch-as-catch-can Mr. Eliot indulges him in is superbly well done in superb verse. The psychological conflict between egoism and faith is always of some interest; but one cannot help feeling that today it ranks among the minor conflicts unless it is stated in contemporary terms, and it is difficult to believe that Mr. Eliot's faith supplies these terms." - Sayers, "A Year in the Theatre", 654-655.

⁶⁰Eliot, "A Commentary" (15.60) 461-462.

⁶¹Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, ed. by Coghill, 105.

⁶²Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum", 11.

⁶³Eliot, "Shakespearian Criticism", 302.

⁶⁴Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, 74.

⁶⁵Smith, T.S. Eliot's Dramatic Theory and Practice, 106.

⁶⁶Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 75-76. Browne notes that the Tempter deletes one phrase, "for the pattern is the action and the suffering", from Becket's original lines in I, 208-217.

⁶⁷Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 85.

⁶⁸See Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 24, and Eliot, The Rock, 75.

⁶⁹See Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 89.

⁷⁰Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, ed. by Coghill, 100.

⁷¹Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 77. Browne here quotes a speech by Becket printed in the first Faber edition but deleted from subsequent editions:

Priests. . . .

What shall become of us, my Lord, if you are
killed; what shall become of us?

Thomas That again is another theme

To be developed and resolved in the pattern of time.

It is not for me to run from city to city;

To meet death gladly is only

The only way in which I can defend

The Law of God, the holy canons.

These lines, if included in present editions of the play, would occur directly after II, 266.

⁷²Eliot, "Burnt Norton", ll. 83-90.

⁷³Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, 48-52.

⁷⁴Eliot, "A Commentary" (13.52) 452.

⁷⁵In the original production, costume design was used to emphasize the contemporary aspect of the temptation scenes. See Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 62.

⁷⁶See above, page 74 (n.22), and page 27 (n.6) respectively, for continuations of Eliot's "A Commentary" (13.52) 452, quoted immediately above, n.74.

⁷⁷Eliot, The Waste Land (1969) 11. 60-63, and, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", 11. 3, 4 and 131.

⁷⁸Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", 11. 123.

⁷⁹See above, page 89 (n.61).

⁸⁰Eliot, "A Commentary" (10.40) 485.

⁸¹Eliot, "A Commentary" (12.49) 645.

⁸²See above, page 102 (n.91).

⁸³Eliot, "Religion without Humanism", 107.

⁸⁴See above, pages 89-90 (n.62).

⁸⁵Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 68. Browne remarks that on December 21, 1936, the B.B.C. television production of Murder in the Cathedral marked the first experiment in super-imposition. The Tempters were placed on Becket's image as they emerged into his conscious mind.

⁸⁶Eliot and Hoellering, The Film of Murder in the Cathedral, 8-9.

⁸⁷Eliot, "A Commentary" (12.48) 470.

⁸⁸See Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 44. According to Browne, it is the impassioned plea of the Chorus which "penetrates" Becket's heart, and "enables him to gain freedom".

⁸⁹Eliot, "Burnt Norton", 11. 47-61.

⁹⁰Eliot, Sweeney Agonistes (1962) 11. 171-196.

⁹¹Eliot, The Rock, 8-9.

⁹²Eliot, "Catholicism and International Order", 118-119.

⁹³Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 44.

⁹⁴Eliot, "A Commentary" (14.54) 90.

⁹⁵Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, 70-103.

⁹⁶The banners were Browne's idea. If they are used then the first choral passage need not be included. Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 48.

⁹⁷Eliot, "A Commentary" (15.61) 664-665.

Chapter Five

¹See above, page 99.

²Browne, Verse in the Modern English Theatre, 20-21.

³Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 87.

⁴Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 83-84.

⁵See above, page 56.

⁶See above, page 136.

⁷Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 87.

⁸Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 84.

⁹Browne, Verse in the Modern English Theatre, 18.

¹⁰Eliot, "Poetry and Drama", 84.

¹¹Eliot, "Religion and Literature", 392.

¹²Quoted by Browne in The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 312.

¹³Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 27.

¹⁴Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 39.

¹⁵Eliot, "The Dry Salvages", 11. 156-162.

¹⁶McLuhan, "[untitled editorial]", 82.

¹⁷Eliot, "A Commentary" (11.44) 472.

¹⁸See above, page 16.

- ¹⁹Eliot, "Religion without Humanism", 112.
- ²⁰Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 84-85.
- ²¹Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 203.
- ²²Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 22.
- ²³Lewis, Time and Western Man, 420.
- ²⁴See above, page 17.
- ²⁵Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays 117.
- ²⁶Lewis, Time and Western Man, 394.
- ²⁷Lewis, Time and Western Man, 394-395.
- ²⁸Lewis, Time and Western Man, 417.
- ²⁹See above, page 187.
- ³⁰Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 22.
- ³¹Lewis, The Diabolical Principle, 235.
- ³²Lewis, The Diabolical Principle, 238.
- ³³Free, Revolution for the Hell of It, 183.
- ³⁴Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 311.
- ³⁵Eliot, "The Unity of European Culture", 118.
- ³⁶See above, page 18.
- ³⁷Eliot, "The Unity of European Culture", 118-119.
- ³⁸Lewis, Men without Art, 95.
- ³⁹Isaacs, An Assessment of Twentieth Century Literature, 150. The quoted lines are from The Family Reunion, I, 2, 130-131.
- ⁴⁰Eliot, "Little Gidding", 11. 103-107.
- ⁴¹Eliot, "The Beating of a Drum", 11.
- ⁴²Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, 87-88.

⁴³Cornford, The Origin of Attic Comedy, 88.

⁴⁴Eliot, Sweeney Agonistes, l. 121.

⁴⁵Rose, The Letters of Wyndham Lewis, 518.

⁴⁶Rose, The Letters and Wyndham Lewis, 519. The connection of the Thames and the Mississippi here suggests an intimate association of the two in Eliot's mind. If such association is valid, even though unscholarly, then perhaps an association of Wishwood (the family house in The Family Reunion), Hollywood, and The Sacred Wood might not be out of place. Peter Quilpe, a Hollywood personality in The Cocktail Party may be a descendent of Peter Quince who hailed from a wood near Athens, and so on. At any rate, the publishing industry - what would Faber and Faber be without pulp and paper - stands as probably our last great connection with the magic of the forest. It may be, perhaps, for the conservation of that magic that (to cite only one instance of the current snub on Eliot scholarship by those who guard the holy corpus) the recently discovered manuscripts of The Waste Land and other of Eliot's early poems have been so greedily hoarded.

Given Harcourt-Reilly's inclination to play the detective and super-spy, Lewis's connection of Reilly and Eliot may have been corroborated by Donald Gallup. Gallup reported that "To add to both Pound's and Eliot's distractions [during 1917-1918] there was a scheme to get Eliot, who had been turned down by the Navy because of an old hernia, into the United States Intelligence Service. Pound got Quinn to cable his support, but the plan was rendered unnecessary by the Armistice."

⁴⁷Albee, A Delicate Balance, 155-156.

⁴⁸Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 61-62.

⁴⁹Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 53-54.

⁵⁰Eliot, "Little Gidding", ll. 121-122.

⁵¹Eliot, Sweeney Agonistes, ll. 262-267, and 293-300.

⁵²Eliot, The Idea of a Christian Society, 31.

⁵³Eliot, "[Greeting]", [102].

⁵⁴Eliot, Notes towards the Definition of Culture, 85. See also above, page 188.

⁵⁵Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 316-317.

⁵⁶Eliot, "A Dedication to my Wife", ll. 1-12.

⁵⁷Eliot, The Waste Land (1969) 71-72.

⁵⁸Eliot, "East Coker", 122.

⁵⁹Gardener, The Art of T.S. Eliot, 58-59.

⁶⁰Williamson, A Reader's Guide to T.S. Eliot, 211; and Sewell, "Lewis Carroll and T.S. Eliot as Nonsense Poets", in T.S. Eliot: a Collection of Critical Essays, 67.

⁶¹Eliot, Ash Wednesday, ll. 66-68.

⁶²Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, ed. by Coghill (I, 192-195) 31.

⁶³Eliot, Murder in the Cathedral, ed. by Coghill (II, 235-244) 74-75.

⁶⁴Fowles, The Magus, 438-439.

⁶⁵Eliot, "[a Review of] Son of Woman: The Story of D.H. Lawrence by John Middleton Murry", 773.

⁶⁶Browne, The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays, 233. Browne also alluded to this incident in the Introduction to his edition of Three European Plays, 10.

⁶⁷Marlowe, Dr. Faustus (V, 122-127) 10.

⁶⁸Shakespeare, The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (I, 2, 135-136) 15.

⁶⁹Eliot, "Eeldrop and Appleplex" (4.5) 19.

⁷⁰Eliot, "Virgil and the Christian World", 140-141.

⁷¹Eliot, "Virgil and the Christian World", 140.

⁷²Eliot, "A Commentary" (11.42) 72.

⁷³A suggestion made to me by Mr. Peter du Satouy of Faber and Faber, Ltd.

⁷⁴Howard, The Garden Cities of Tomorrow, 48.

⁷⁵Howard, The Garden Cities of Tomorrow, 61.

⁷⁶See above, page 202.

⁷⁷Howard, The Garden Cities of Tomorrow, 76.

- ⁷⁸Eliot, "Burnt Norton", ll. 22-39.
- ⁷⁹Eliot, "Burnt Norton", ll. 6-8.
- ⁸⁰Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture, 716.
- ⁸¹Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture, 719.
- ⁸²Eliot, "Virgil and the Christian World", 142-144.
- ⁸³Penty, "The Philosophy of J.M. Keynes", 394.
- ⁸⁴Eliot, "Burnt Norton", ll. 11-29.
- ⁸⁵Eliot, "The Dry Salvages", ll. 124-132.
- ⁸⁶Eliot, "Virgil and the Christian World", 144.
- ⁸⁷Browne, "From The Rock to The Confidential Clerk", 64.
- ⁸⁸See above, page 182.
- ⁸⁹See above, page 181.
- ⁹⁰Browne, "The Dramatic Verse of T.S. Eliot", 203.
- ⁹¹Jones, The Plays of T.S. Eliot, 89-91, 143-145, 156-157, 180-182.
- ⁹²Hall, "The Art of Poetry, I: T.S. Eliot", 61.
- ⁹³Eliot, "Modern Education and the Classics", 513.
- ⁹⁴Eliot, "The Classics and the Man of Letters", 160.
- ⁹⁵Eliot, "The Aims of Education: 2. The Interrelation of Aims",
86.
- ⁹⁶Eliot, "The Aims of Education: 2. The Interrelation of Aims",
90.
- ⁹⁷Eliot, "The Aims of Education: 2. The Interrelation of Aims",
91-92.

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